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# The Autobiography of A Neurasthene

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RC415 C58

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# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A NEURASTHENE

AS TOLD BY ONE OF THEM  
AND RECORDED BY

MARGARET A. CLEAVES, M. D.



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*Dedicated  
To Another  
Physician, Friend and Counsellor*

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS is the biography of a physician. The actual conditions are recorded. It does not matter whether it was really a man or a woman. The complete exhaustion of supreme nerve centres as in this case rarely befalls a woman. So far as the fulfillment of professional duties, the achievement of a definite purpose with this tremendous handicap is concerned, it was done. The physician whose story is told, and also the physician in attendance both knew from their own experience the worst of this condition without a pathology, but which evidences a definite pathological physiology. Never for one moment did either the one or the other abate their interest in their professional work, nor their manifold duties in relation to life. The physician in attendance did not know from his own experience the anguish of pain, inability and all it meant to keep up courage and activity until after fully eight years of attendance upon the patient whose biography is recorded. There had been premonitions as early as at the time of his patient's complete break. While he never coddled himself and while he has always been the quiet, calm,

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self-poised and kindhearted physician, he has had since his own experience a better appreciation of the condition of his patient, and while there is neither fretting nor moaning on the part of the one or the other, there is a stronger bond of mutual confidence and understanding between them than before.

The patient felt at times that her condition was not fully appreciated by him, but after all his optimistic view, his constant effort to encourage the use, not the waste of such energy as was possessed, was infinitely better than the opinion given him by an eminent neurologist, to whom he confided the story of his muscular contractions, similar in nature to those of a progressive spinal cord lesion, of the intense neuritis, the loss of power to the same extent as with the patient whose story is told, so that objects would fall from his hands. The patient had been through the same experience. It was with the greatest difficulty at one time in the experience of both to even use knife and fork at the table, while the routine carving was an impossibility. It was difficult for him to get about to make his professional calls because of the weakness of the leg muscles, while at night the cramping was of such a nature as to bring him out of bed with a bound. The throat muscles and all those essential to mastication and deglutition in both cases grew very weak as well. There were uncomfortable dreams,

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terrors and profound depression. The specialist whom he consulted told him that he had seen three similar cases, but that they all died. The physician patient, as did I, told him he had neurasthenia. He is not only not dead, but feels so well as to say he could not live if he felt better. I, who record this history, know the condition of both intimately and as a physician my professional experience has been largely with nerve and mental conditions.

This story is written with the definite purpose of removing, if possible, the sting and opprobrium which the essential neurasthene bears because of the long continued pose of the neurasthene who does not exhaust neuronie energy, but poisons it by his way of living. The one is just as unphysiological as the other, but it not infrequently happens, as in these two instances, that the stress and strain of meeting life's obligations is too much even though life is lived carefully and without dissipations of any sort. A symptomatic neurasthene who has been under my professional observation for the past seven or eight years, was told many years since by a practitioner that she had an arthritis, that she never would be well and that she could eat as she pleased, it would make no difference. She has set herself resolutely to the carrying out of his prognosis and following his advice in the matter of eating—she weighs two hundred and

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sixty-five pounds—is never well. The term *arthritis* is rolled under her tongue as a delicious morsel. She has absolutely nothing of the sort, but unless physiological stimuli are pretty constantly used to keep up good tissue change, she gets by reason of her toxin-laden blood sore nerves and muscles. Her mental activities are all centred upon herself. If she had to work as hard as either one or the other of these physicians, she would be a well woman to-day, as she has never had any great stress or strain in her life. I have always had great sympathy with the husband who has told her many a time that she would be well, if she had to wash for a living—and so she would. That is a different condition from the one recorded or from that of the attendant physician.

Both of these were born potential neurasthenes, both have worked hard all their lives in their chosen profession, both have achieved success and both have been tremendously handicapped. Neither of them has lost their courage, their professional acumen, their humanitarian instincts, their enjoyment of life in its highest and best sense and they face their work to-day with the same indomitable will as heretofore, with the same cheerful optimism and the same sense of humor.

Their professional brethren are often in evidence at medical meetings when they are not. But this does not mean that they fail in keeping abreast, even in the

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advance guard of the science of medicine. They never fail the needs of those who come under their care in their single-hearted devotion, but they are constantly face to face with life's most interesting problem, the conservation of energy. I, who chronicle these things, know this.

If this book teaches a better understanding of this condition from the patient's point of view to the end of a more intelligent and appreciative care of this class of cases, a less frequent sending of them from one specialist to another for this or that operation to the end of inviting still greater disaster, it will have served its purpose.

The patient whose story is told has not escaped suggestions as to the change of her architecture, in an operation upon the extrinsic muscles of the eye by her oculist, but she has always laughingly told him that her regard for the integrity of her anatomical structures was such that it could not be considered for one moment.

The pathological physiology of the neurasthene may be in some instances for aught that is known the forerunner of an actual anatomical lesion, the quivering or fibrillary contraction of exhausted or toxic muscles, may be the forerunner of a progressive muscular atrophy. On the other hand it may not. Give the patient the optimistic view. Hope is the inspiration of life. Without it we are rudderless. I, the



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chronicler, know this all so well. Even this morning I write, I arose without a ray of hope or light in my day. This was because I was too tired on the yesterday. I did not give up or lie by, but went to work to complete this story and have simply put out of mind the depression, ennui, sense of bodily and mental fatigue, and taken on by supreme effort a content of mind that will go far towards recovering my best poise. This too upon the morning when I was to have gone to a nearby city, as the guest this evening of an organization of medical men for their annual meeting and banquet as well as for the usual after dinner speech which I had anticipated because of the spirit of *camaraderie* with many of its members, but which I had to give up, because the conservation of neuronc energy was absolutely essential to the proper performance of my professional duties and the meeting of life's obligations.

No! It is not easy to always do this, but while in the profession, there is no other course.

A much more careful and less exacting life is pleasantly anticipated in the not distant future, but I do not know whether it will bring the same content of mind, the same sense of satisfaction as is experienced in meeting the demands of a professional life. It is however the hope of the trio. All are tired—tired oftentimes with a fatigue so overpowering as to smother and crush all the joy of living.



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# The Autobiography of a Neurasthene

## CHAPTER ONE

*"To withdraw Something from Thyself to give to Others—that is a Point of Humanity and Gentleness, which never Taketh away so much Commodity as it Bringeth again."*

SIR THOMAS MORE

**I**T was Heincich Heine who devoted the people who passed under his observation in the course of his travels, to his desires and needs. For example a particularly billowy, cushiony, plump, well lined millionaire suggested to his mind the luxury of a roomy, well upholstered and well appointed arm-chair, known to the French as a *chaise percee*, and he at once proposed to himself that the proceeds from his ready pen in treating this subject should be devoted to the purchase of just such a luxurious chair.

Similarly I propose that the sufferings I have endured both from the fact that I am a neurasthene as well as the suffering I have endured from the opprobrium which applies to even the true neurasthene, because of the frequent counterfeiting of the condition, should serve in retrospect as a mental divertisement. It is further hoped that their expression in this way

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will lead to a better appreciation of the condition and needs of the unfortunate neurasthene of the essential type.

In these ways I expect my return for the days, weeks, months, years even of pain and much disability, while it is possible that I may with Heine devote any pecuniary emolument accruing from my relation to the publishers as a means of providing some especial luxury of comfort, which appeals to me. I fancy that the nearest things to my heart are radiance, air, space, quiet, books, music and congenial friends. These can all be bought save the friends, and they are always mine.

The condition was not invited, but came as the result of an unstable nerve organization, my birth-right, for after all animals, other than the human ones, have the best chance. This and my duty towards the obligations of life which had to be met alone and unaided, proved too much for my limited endowment of strength. No one ever worked harder and suffered greater hardships of certain kinds, nor in the judgment of others accomplished more under the severest of handicaps, than have I. Although my life has been filled with pain and suffering, yet despite my physical condition it is said I have done more than my share of the world's work, to have made for



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myself a name and fame as well as to have added to the sum total of human good.

But that is neither here nor there, for it is a recognized fact that the work of the world is largely done by neurasthenes. An eminent neurologist has written of the passing of neurasthenia. Neurasthenia is not passing. It is the age of neurasthenia. The strenuous high pressure life of the day favors its development. The fashionable sufferer or the Beautiful N. E. of Augustus Hoppin, upon whom the physician like the housefly is in chronic attendance, is not so much in evidence now as when Hoppin wrote his satire on the Nerve Exhaustionist. The entire trend of modern life is in favor of out-door sports and athletic exercises which are inimical to the development and perpetuation of the neurasthenic condition. It is no longer fashionable to lie in the cloistered seclusion of luxurious surroundings with all the paraphernalia of interesting invalidism about one. On the contrary, life in the open is the mode and flying over the country in motor cars, riding across country, perhaps following the hounds in the pursuit of luckless Reynard, playing at tennis and golf, boating, swimming do not contribute to the neurasthenic state formerly so ultra-fashionable. The radiant energy of the sun, the fresh air, the rapid motion and the varied interests are all against the existence of the neurasthenic condition.



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True neurasthenes are born initially, not made. The conditions of life may favor the development of the condition, but there is inherent at birth a fundamental nutritive lack of the nerve centres which predisposes under favorable environment to its development. Neurasthenia not only has been, but still is a much abused term, and hosts of men and women, especially the latter, cloak themselves in the panoply of the neurasthene, bringing the true sufferer thereby into disrepute. It is a condition too little understood and appreciated by the average physician.

The suffering of the essential neurasthene is not imaginary by any means. It is as real as the pain from a fractured bone. But because of the absence of anatomic lesions or a pathological anatomy, the pathological physiology is ignored in an estimate of the physical suffering and mental torment endured and its genuineness questioned. But it is the most real of all suffering. The pain of an ulcerated tooth, of a ruptured ankle-ligament, of fractured ribs slips from the memory, but the anguish of the neurasthenic state, while it becomes dulled with the passage of time, never totally disappears. The least little over-fatigue, shock, anxiety, strain of any sort, the things that cannot be avoided in life, precipitates a crisis and the anguish is reawakened in the memories of the cerebral cells. It is because the nerve cell with its

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branches is a unified organism, a self-contained living being physiologically, the sole active principle in every vital function, that the anguish of the neurasthene is never quite forgotten and is so easily reawakened. It could not be otherwise, for it must be remembered that the neurons are the medium of sensation will and even thought—the highest of psychic functions. Once they have passed through the travail and anguish associated with complete exhaustion of their stored up energy and temporary inability to function as generators of energy or have been poisoned by the products of incomplete chemical change, painful impressions are easily reawakened.

This is well illustrated by the mental state of the chronic neurasthene the following morning which is not apt to be a happy one, in fact I have often felt that it was not in any sense better than that of those who linger long over their cups. The utter lassitude of body, the weariness of mind, the painful cerebration, the feeling as though one had committed some direful deed over night, the sense of physiologic sin, the loss of self-confidence, the depression, the accentuation of every nerve pain from which one ever suffered, in fact the utter discord and lack of harmony between the mind and body, between oneself and the external world is well nigh maddening the day after. All this is wrong and should not be. The only op-

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portunity for better conditions than these is to be found in a strict observance of the neurasthene's golden rule, never to go beyond the point of fatigue. Not only is this necessary, but also long golden care free days with congenial friends and in an environment, inviting content and happiness. These things are difficult to encompass always, but constant effort should be made in their direction. My experience has been both extensive and bitter, but it has taught me a lesson that never would have been learned in any other way, and for that matter would not have needed the learning in the sense that it has, had I not broken so badly under the stress and strain of life, and that lesson is one of the most beautiful in nature, the conservation of energy. Whatever our handicaps are, we can overcome them always to lesser or greater degree by conservation of our forces, to the end that life's need and obligations be met whether we take of life its bountiful largesse or not. Deprivation does not necessarily stunt nor mean starvation. Joy and beauty are everywhere, if we only learn to perceive them and the degree of health which one learns to maintain is rich with possibilities in the way of achievement and best of all content and happiness.

I know these things as few people know them, and while I have suffered much, been deprived of much and disappointed of achieving much for which I have

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had the desire, ambition, thirst and talent by reason of my handicap I have had in many ways a life filled to the brim. If I may trust the onlooker, I should not desire one thing more than has been mine. That I do, however, is only human nature. The observer only reads that which spells success and knows naught of the long weary hours of pain and disability without achievement of any sort. In all these varied experiences of mine all the untoward occurrences chronicled, my course of conduct did not invite them only in so far as my course of conduct was governed by the inexorable law of need must. In my professional relation to my patients, there is no undue coddling. On the contrary the most bracing and tonic regime which can be made to appeal to the best in the patient's nature is used. Exception is always made, however, when it is a question of exhaustion as was mine. I had to work, but no patient in the condition in which I found myself should take strenuous exercise. In attempting it, I interfered with my best good, expending energy unduly, not conserving it. It is true that by reason of their inheritance and environment there is a large class of people, for whom but little physical exercise is necessary to keep them in good condition. By environment is meant fresh air, suitable temperatures, proper food, clothing, bathing, dwellings and all the various hygienic conditions and

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surroundings that tend to promote health. When one of such an intense temperament as mine and as constant intellectual activity is so environed, the equivalent for a certain amount of bodily exercise is provided. Persons so situated may often find in the pursuits into which they enter earnestly and enthusiastically, a physical equivalent for a certain amount of bodily exercise. Again there is often experienced by those who take large views of life and fully realize the dignity and importance of their mission, a physical equivalent for exercise in their mental work. This has always been true of me and there has always been a tremendous expenditure of energy in meeting the requirements of professional work. Still further constituted as I am, when I read, write, speak or think, I do it all over and feel the effects of it in every fibre of my being. But fortunately or unfortunately, according to the viewpoint, most people are not so highly organized and have to resort to other methods to secure good physical results.



## CHAPTER TWO

*"The Childhood shows the Man,  
As Morning shows the Day."*

MILTON, PARADISE REGAINED.

**B**ORN a neurasthene. Yes, but oh the delight of my childhood. I wonder was it as beautiful to me at the time as in the retrospect. The memory of it has compensated for many weary hours of suffering and sense of uselessness in later life. My physician father left his New England home as a young man, because the raw bleak cold of the northern Atlantic coast made it impossible with his susceptible lung tissue and recurring pulmonary hemorrhages to live there. It was during the pioneer days of the Middle West when the tide of emigration set from New England and the Southeastern states, Virginia among them, to the fertile and alluring prairies of first Ohio, then Indiana, Illinois and the then territory of Wisconsin.

On horseback my father wended his way tarrying a time in Ohio and subsequently in Indiana. In both

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of these states he entered the offices of experienced preceptors, with whom in lieu of a medical college he studied. His thorough fundamental education in addition to the power of a well poised mind, abundant common sense and sound judgment beyond his years helped him to become one of the most judicious of medical advisers, one who rarely made mistakes and who in a long and large country practice endeared himself to all the people for whom he cared and with whom he came in contact. He was in every sense the beloved physician, and of him and his influence I shall often care to speak. From Indiana, with his spurs newly won, he travelled to the garden spot of this territory and took up his residence in a country to which nature had been generous with prodigality. There he met my mother, the eldest daughter of a large family who had but recently arrived from Virginia. Her father, my grandfather, a sturdy Scot of the Clan of Cameron, had left Edinburgh to seek his fortunes in the New World. Entering by way of Canada, he drifted to Virginia where he met my grandmother of good old North of Ireland stock and gentle birth. The then far west allured him and offered to him opportunities for his rapidly growing family not afforded in Virginia. Thus my father met my mother, married her and made a home.

The first three years of his sojourn in what was



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then the far West he practiced his profession in the county seat of one of the older and more populous counties. At the end of this period, he was called to a village in a neighboring county to take charge of a proposed college. It was his purpose when he left his New England home for the west to engage in the calling of a teacher for which he was peculiarly fitted, but the college scheme was never carried out and he devoted his life to the practice of his profession. He was twice chosen to represent his county in the State Legislature, and that when it was not so much an empty honor as now. His sterling qualities of mind and heart commanded respect and esteem as a citizen as well as a physician. Both my father and mother possessed in the highest and most beautiful sense Christian attributes and both belonged to that noble company of sturdy pioneers who by their diligence and virtue gave to the state of my birth the noble name it bears to-day. My father's home was a haven of refuge for a band of congregational home missionary pastors. They were a band of noble, intelligent, cultured young men, imbued with the highest ideals as to their calling and possessing the best qualities of mind and heart. I do not recall that any one of them ever did aught to prejudice their calling, which after all is saying very much. One of them still lives, a dear silver haired man, widely known both there and in the East and universally beloved.

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They were constantly the guests of my childhood's home and unquestionably exercised a helpful influence upon the developing minds of my sisters and myself.

My mother was the embodiment of all the highest qualities of wife and mother, than which there is no place for which woman is better fitted or in which she can find greater happiness. The pioneer life called out the best and most sturdy qualities on the part of all. Seven children came to brighten their lives and not one of them was unwelcome, save that the sister next older than myself rebelled most bitterly when the last one came. That sister rebelled at many things. She was less elemental than I, as were my other sisters, and her fiber was more that of remote ancestors, whose lives were spent in an environment of greater ease than was possible to the children of pioneer parents in a pioneer land. Had she lived, she would have joined the vast army of those evidencing a symptomatic neurasthenia, although she would never have been an essential neurasthene, for her calibre was not that of immolation, nor had she the mind that found its highest interest in exacting studies. She was essentially the sweet and sensitive woman with a temperament that was poetic and artistic and withal pleasure-loving. I recall her vividly as she appeared in the months following my father's death: tall, slender, willowy, with an oval, dreamy

face, long ringlets of beautiful brown hair hanging over her shoulders, dressed in densest black fashioned with long unbroken lines which accentuated her slender grace. The pathetic melancholy of her face enhanced by her garb was to a certain extent inherent, but the death of her fiancée, which followed within a few months of that of our father, served to heighten her air of dreamy melancholy. Luckily for her as she was absolutely unfitted for the buffetings of an unsheltered life it was ended before she felt the strain that came from my father's being taken away.

The sixth child was my little brother, my father's namesake, and all who know fatherhood and motherhood know what his birth meant to my parents. When he was but seven months old we all had whooping cough. I remember as but yesterday how I clung to one or the other of the posts of the old-fashioned high poster bedstead in my paroxysms of coughing with no especial care because of three younger ones, one the dear little brother whose sensitive lung tissue lacked the necessary resistance to withstand the invasion of the pneumonic germ. Then it was a lung fever, not pneumonia, and the pneumonic germ was undiscovered. It was June and the world was a riot of beauty. One day, I was from six to seven years of age, when everyone having any responsibility or appreciation of the tragedy being enacted were con-

cerned for the dear little baby and my broken-hearted parents, I wandered away into the seclusion of the sunny orchards, where wild strawberries were growing in abundance. I was apt as a child, and still am, when trouble or change came to find my way to some secluded spot and I have never known anything dearer or sweeter than the orchards and the meadows of my childhood's home. In my childish way I wanted to do something that would be helpful and kind to my little brother and as I wandered under the trees and over the grass, I stooped to pick the delicious wild strawberries, breaking the stems off near to the ground as I would a flower. With a beautiful cluster—the picture is just as vivid after all these years as it was on that radiant June day, I walked back to the house and sat down on the doorstep with the sunshine all about me, holding fast the cluster of berries. This memory came back to me in fullest force one beautiful day in May when in crossing the Appennines on the way from Florence to Bologna and thence to Venice a picturesque group of olive-skinned Italian children presented just such clusters of berries for sale. In a flash I was back in that pioneer land, a little scrap of humanity sitting in the sunshine awaiting, I knew not what. Something seemed to tell me not to go inside; I remember it was so still and hushed, there was no

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one about as I sat there quiet and expectant. It was my dear father who came, and taking me on his knee told me that my little brother had left us. I remember nothing more until the day of the funeral when once more memory recalls the being placed in a carriage and the slow processional drive to the cemetery and the lowering of the little white coffin into the open grave.

From that time on I was my father's "boy" and we were close companions and comrades.

What a peaceful memory that is of my childhood's home, when the wild wood was in flower, in the midst of the turmoil, ceaseless activity of this busy, bustling, yes hustling city. Here I have lived for many years and question if I would be content anywhere else or away from all its activities, but I hold these childish memories as precious and priceless and have a feeling of intense pity for every city-born child.

The years slipped away uneventfully save for the delightful Saturday afternoons in the autumn, when my father arranged, for at least one or two afternoons, his professional calls so that he might be free to devote himself to his children. Then we were bundled into the light wagon, I know one, two or more of my sisters were with us, but it is only my father who stands out clearly in my memory. I have no recollection of being separated from him at all on



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these delightful occasions when we went nutting—or rarely for that matter.

The beauty of those primitive woods along the banks of the creeks and rivers of a section to which nature had been prodigal in her gifts. In the spring time the rolling meadows and praireland were covered with a wealth of beautiful flowers, regal in their beauty of coloring, their height and their queen like pose in the midst of vast stretches of unbroken space. I have often heard my mother say that in her first glimpses of the prairie on her way with her father and family from Virginia there was revealed the most beautiful sight she had ever seen. It is not the same today, there is lacking the beauty of youth and primeval times. This is true it would have had less charm, had it not been for the woodlands bordering the inland streams. These oftentimes had steep and precipitous banks, springs were concealed here and there along them, while the formations were such as to command the interest of the geologist far and near. But the wild wood all alone made a picture that has never left me and that I have never seen reproduced. The nearest approach to it I found several years since some seventy miles distant from the big city of my adopted home and its similitude led to the acquirement of a bit of land and the building of a home thereupon. Wild cherries, wild plums—the delicious

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chickasaw plum—wild apples and hosts of wild flowers, quiet, peaceful, rippling streams or roaring torrents according to elemental conditions, oak, hickory, maple, walnut, butternut trees, hazel bushes galore, blackberries, raspberries, wild gooseberries, grapes and currents all combined to make a wilderness of beauty. In the autumn the foliage was brilliant and beautiful. The sumach added its brilliancy to the foliage of forest trees and the little growing things beneath one's feet were no less beautiful in their varied autumn tints than in their dainty spring time verdure.

The joy of those long afternoons in the autumn's golden Indian summer radiance with the invigorating air like wine, free from school and every care, with my father and sisters. The delight of gathering the nuts already fallen and as they fell in response to the furious onslaught of my father's blows. When the various bags and baskets were all filled, black walnuts, white walnuts or butternuts, hickory nuts and hazelnuts, then with bits of gorgeous autumn foliage, gaily decorating every part of the wagon, we drove home through the rapidly falling twilight. The nuts were cared for by myself and sisters and furnished forth the entertainment with apples and cider for the winter evenings, whether we were alone or had guests.



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There is a memory worth reliving. At this moment I am longing for the country and in this retrospect I have a comfort. All this beauty awaits us in different parts of God's country, but we rarely lift our eyes from the drudgery which environs us and have practically no conception of such a picture as I still see and have tried to draw. I am glad my childhood was environed in this fashion and that its memories have not escaped recall.

## CHAPTER THREE

*"On the dark stair where a bear is  
So liable to follow one."*

**T**HE little climbing figure on the stair clutching her skirt with one hand and looking back over her shoulder in her terror to the foot of the stair, vividly illustrates the feeling from which neurasthenes suffer, whether children or adults. I recall the terror I used to feel as a child when my father or mother sent me upstairs after dark on some errand. In a pioneer land there was no general lighting of the house, lamps provided the illumination of living rooms, while candles served for the bed rooms. But the children were not permitted to carry them. I would turn cold with fear and dread of what I did not know, but I was taught to obey and my fear was never voiced. Trembling and alone I would go to the room specified to get the desired object. This I could do with considerable courage because I knew what and whom I left behind me in the warmth and light, but when I turned my back on the silence and darkness of the upper floor I ran downstairs in a per-

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fect panic, but always with the thought in my small mind that my precipitate descent must not be noticeable,—for so strong was the Spartan spirit of my early life and environment that even then I felt that my parents must not know my fear and cowardice, for so I regarded it. I know better now and when I have the care of nervous children, while I endeavor to teach them self-control and courage, I try to spare them needless suffering. Certain instincts are ennobling, others are debasing, but all are instinctive. Fear of darkness is one which among others in neurasthenes is emphasized.

The religion of my puritan father was orthodox in the extreme. One of the books to which I had access and sought because it was illustrated was the Bible Dictionary. I can this moment as I write see the exact place on the page of a picture of a heathen god, made of iron and with a roaring furnace fire inside, into which little children not of the elect were being condigned. It always gripped me with terror. Had my dear father known this he would have explained it all to me so as to rob it of its terrors, but I never told him nor any one until since my illness I told my physician, and then only when we were talking of the means to be used to prevent the development of the neurasthenic condition in children predisposed. A younger sister whose coming interfered with my baby-

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hood (I think the early deprivation of nature's food is one reason why milk has been my standby all my life) and who was larger and stronger than I, used to keep me in perfect terror by telling me that she had swallowed a pin, a needle or a button. So far as I can understand she did this out of a spirit of mischief pure and simple, for the difference in our ages was such that naturally we had the same habits of work and play and were always very happy together. I never told my mother or my father of these things, as I was brought up not to tell tales on my sister nor my playmates. But this sister of mine gave me many a *mauvais quart d'heure*.

When a child of about three or four I begged my mother to let me go to school with my elder sisters. She preferred the request to my father who said Yes! I could go, if I wanted to do so. The teacher, a New England woman, was given a home by my parents because there was no other suitable place in that pioneer land. I do not recall the going, but I remember distinctly of standing before this teacher who insisted upon my using the book provided for the regular class. I refused to do so, for I had with me my greatest treasure, a book my father had given me, and what he did or said was final with me. She knew I was not to be regarded as a regular attendant and she was also indebted to my father and mother

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for her home and many courtesies. But she kept me standing before her, insisting that I should read from the school book and finally, when my stubborn little soul would not yield, took up the ever ready ferule to punish me. With that the two younger sisters of my mother and my elder sisters interfered and told her she should not. The next morning I begged my mother to let me stay home saying if she would I would be so very good and learn all my letters. The matter was again referred to my father who said by all means, I was too young for school and that he only assented because of my desire. I taught myself the alphabet to read and spell, going to my mother in the midst of her multifariously busy life, as the wife of a country practitioner in a pioneer country as well as the mother of young children, asking "What does that spell, mother?" She always stopped to tell me and I never went to school again until I was about eight years of age and was reading in what was known as the Fourth Reader, having finished the others at home. My hatred of that teacher which was intense remained with me until my adult life. The experience did me no good, nor did that with another teacher who, when I was from eight to nine years of age, stood me up on a table before the whole school, because I could not give the entire multiplication table. I got as far as the nine's and there I floundered. I can recall all

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the intolerable anguish of it, the publicity, the feeling that I had failed, and that to me was ignominy. Doubtless these and other experiences emphasized the condition of nerve instability which was my birth-right. My parents would have known nothing of this, for we were brought up to obey, and a punishment at school might mean another at home, had not my aunt visited the school on the morning in question and been witness to what she felt was the grossest indignity and injustice. This teacher was almost brutal in her treatment of the older children, especially the boys.

Shortly afterwards she became the wife of a physician friend of my father's of whom I was fond, but I could not understand why he made her his wife. Later on a little son was born. Many a time did my mother send me there out of the goodness of her heart to rock the baby's cradle or watch him while his mother attended to duties elsewhere. Such were the neighborly customs in this primitive country in which we lived. I used to ponder over the matter in my childish mind and wonder if I might not punish that baby in some way in payment for what his mother had made me suffer. But I never did and was always loyal to the trust reposed in me.

All these things have made me very considerate of children and childish terrors. I have the guidance



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now of a young girl of thirteen, who from her babyhood has suffered from neurasthenic dread and fears. Fully a year before her birth her father, an essential neurasthene, was my patient suffering profoundly from an accentuation of his neurasthenic condition. In response to my questioning at his first visit as to whether he had suffered from dread, terror or morbid fears I found that he had. As a child and boy, if he had been away from home for a day or a part of day, upon his return he would leave his horses unattended and rush madly up the hill to his home to be sure that his father was not dead or that nothing had befallen the family in his absence. Replying to my specific question as he sat at the end of the big desk in my consulting room, "Why, doctor, if you should put ten one-thousand dollar bills down on that desk and tell me I could have them if I would go from here to Chicago alone, I would not touch them. I would rather be in the company of the worst person living than to be alone for five minutes." He is now very well in these regards, although apprehensive to a degree if any of his family are not well. The little daughter was born a potential neurasthene and has been afraid of a nameless something nearly all her short life. The development of obsessions came between the fourth and fifth years of age and were excited by stories of



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the Devil, told her by the child of the colored mammy cook. Still, by an absolutely free untrammelled open air life, with her dogs and pony cart and a judicious mother, she is doing very well. Her education has to be carried on at home as she is in constant fear even when the nurse and coachman of from fifteen to twenty years' service accompany her to the private school and bring her back, of some terrible disaster. I question whether a different course would answer in her case, for she has not the sturdy qualities of courage and independence which were of necessity a part of my childish life. I was imbued at an early age with a feeling of responsibility towards life.

One of my earliest recollections is of my mother's slipping out of the lighted living room where we all gathered at night to the long low characteristic verandah of the farm house in which we lived, when my father had not returned from his professional visits which took him far afield even to fifty or more miles, with the woods full of wild cats, the prairies of wolves and occasionally Indians crossing his path. The house overlooked a beautiful lawn which stretched in its luxury of acreage to the high road, a magnificent osage orange hedge defining its limit, while an avenue of locust trees helped to complete the wind break for the extensive orchards of apples, peaches as well as all the small fruits to the side and rear of the house.

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I cannot recall leaving the room with her but I remember distinctly becoming conscious of the vastness, silence and mystery of the night, sometimes with the stars twinkling overhead, often only blackness but never of moonlight, (I fancy she was less anxious on moonlight nights), the howling of the prairie wolves in the distance, and of standing there not much more than a baby with my hand in hers and disposed to childlike questioning, when suddenly my mother who stood in strained listening attitude, would whisperingly say "Hush, hark", and then way down the highway there would come the first faint sound of the horses' hoof beats, I hear them still, to reward her anxious patient solicitude. It was my father returning from his weary round. While the free untrammelled out of door life I led was the best of preventive measures, undoubtedly this anxious watching and waiting did me no good. But after all what is woman's life,—whether wife, mother or that of a doctor, but watching and waiting. One night when my physician was coming to see me (I was far from well) he was late beyond his usual hour and I grew very tired and despondent waiting. When he came he expressed his regret that he should have kept me waiting so long, to which out of the depths of my fatigue and depression I replied "I have waited all my life, doctor. I began it for my father, while I

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was but a baby and it still goes on. I have waited for the little expected life while the mother was in agony, I have waited for the dying, I have watched and waited every blessed minute of my life and I suppose I shall end it all by watching and waiting for death. It is woman's life." To which he answered "Yes; and I am thankful I am not a woman."

My heart was wrapped up in my father. He understood me and my needs and with his gasping breath while dying, his last words were those of concern for me and my future. He never punished me save by calling me to kneel at his side and voicing a word of prayer asking that I should be forgiven my little wrongdoings. It was the hardest punishment to bear I could have received, however, and the memory of it has remained helpfully with me all my life. On the other hand, he saved me from punishment and reprimand by my mother who understood me less well. From the time that I could reach the table by standing on a footstool, it had been my duty to help in the washing of the dishes. One summer morning I remember, perhaps I was ten or eleven,—that a very large and valuable soup tureen slipped through my hands and fell crashing to the verandah floor. My father was coming down the garden walk from the barn, where he had been to direct his man about the "buggy" and horses for his professional visits. My

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mother felt that I had been careless and was about to punish me, when my father's voice rang out on the quiet of the summer morning "Don't punish that child my dear she cannot help it." Was any one ever so grateful as I and with what diligence I applied myself to the little tasks he set me.

It is my hope that these experiences of mine may suggest to father and mothers the need of knowing and meeting their children's needs, to the end of assuring them a fair degree of health. It is only since my severe illness nearly thirteen years since that I have ceased to dream of being a child cradled in my father's arms, the luxury of which I never fully realized until convalescent from an attack of "membranous croup". I have missed him long years and I still miss the comfort of that dream. I felt the sense of protection which I have often experienced the need of in the publicity of my professional life. In a sense it is a life as public as that of the footlights, and the only way I have been able to bear it and keep my courage up has been by the withdrawal of myself into the quiet cloistered enclosure of my library, with my books, pictures, music and an occasional friend.

## CHAPTER FOUR

*"It's the dieting and rubbing the race horse that makes him thin as a flash, that he may be as swift too."*

W. M. BAKER, NEW TIMOTHY.

*"Spare fast, that oft with gods doth diet."*

MILTON, IL PENSEROSO.

**A**LL my life I have been called to account because I did not eat enough. In this opinion my physician has always agreed. In fact, it has afforded him much merri-  
ment from time to time when, in re-  
sponse to his inquiry as to my appetite—what did I take and how much, I have told him of one French chop. Before I could mention in detail the remainder of my dinner, I was met with a smile and the exclamation: "Why, I eat those things with a spoon". Often and again has he recommended me to take half an ounce of bird seed. Now, this has not been willful nor a pose on my part. As a child I have no recollection but that I ate well. I can recall very distinctly how much I enjoyed things and that the home table was all gracious with nutritious, well-cooked and wholesome food. Comparatively few sweets or kickshaws



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were provided and the pleasure of the palate which has lingered with me all the years, was home-made pot-cheese, gooseberry jam, bread and cream. The pot-cheese was always made from the sour and clabbered milk of the dairy and hung out to drain in the kitchen garden. It was placed in a cloth or napkin of thin material kept for the purpose, and only one other thing gave me the same gustatory delight as biting a hole in the napkin and sucking such portion of the cheese therefrom as I could safely take without interfering with my mother's plans for the table. I do not know why I took it in that way for I could always have it for the asking. I fancy there was an intuitive knowledge of Metchnikoff's discovery of the intestinal bacilli foreshadowed in my mind. At any rate, my fondness for and appreciation of all fermented milk stuffs, buttermilk, clabbered milk, pot-cheese, is life-long. Now the prepared milk foods enter largely into my dietary and have for twenty-five years. They do not, however, replace the buttermilk, clabbered milk and pot-cheese of my childhood.

My other favorite dish, although served in abundance on the table, was most enjoyed when obtained in a predatory manner. To get into the pantry adjoining the dairy and with a slice of home-made bread, a jar of gooseberry jam, a pan of milk covered with cream, I was content. My mother used to wonder why the cream did not rise.

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But just two months before my fourteenth birthday my physician father who had just reached the time of life when his professional career promised adequate financial returns for the needs of his large family, fell ill with a typhoid pneumonia. It was a foregone conclusion in his mind that he could not get well from the start. That naturally prejudiced the result, and in two weeks life had slipped its moorings for him and my mother was left with six daughters—two older and three younger than myself—and but a few thousand dollars. With my father's death I lost the best friend I had, the one who understood my temperament and my needs. On his deathbed my future was the one that concerned him most. He knew I was not strong and that to insure the best of conditions I should be carefully cared for. Instead, at the age of fifteen I began teaching country schools in order to pay for the education I wanted. In the homes of the primitive farm people, where I could obtain board, with foodstuffs abundant the cooking was so badly done that I could not eat, and away from home, with no one to look after me, my nutrition naturally suffered, while from trying to eat the coarse food provided for the working man, my digestion was prejudiced. Tea and coffee, which I had never been allowed at home, were taken off and on to supply the stimulus which should have come from the ingestion of suitable food. More than that, if I was not im-



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mersed in a book, my head was in the clouds. I led a very practical life on the one hand for young as I was I gained the reputation of being one of the best teachers in the county, but on the other hand I led a dreamy, introspective sort of life. I could always—not only then, but now as well—make my mind to me a kingdom. It has been a saving clause throughout a peculiarly secluded life in a social sense, although a very public one in its business relation.

The teaching off and on throughout my early life alternated with my college days, as I had to provide the money. At college I cared for myself much of the time and food interested me less than books. In this way unquestionably desire for food and digestive ability were lessened. I can recall while a student that studies were never neglected and that I made book after book my own, but I never stopped long enough to get anything but cornmeal mush and milk to eat. It cost little money, was easily prepared and I liked it. When finished, if it were summer time with book in hand I sought the nearby woodland and finding a comfortable nook, would at once lose sight of every material thing.

Upon my return to my mother's house for the vacation I remember that much was said as to my physical condition and I know I was anaemic and badly nourished. All through life there has been stress and strain with no one to look after my needs. The years

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have been so filled with care for others, and I have been so utterly worn and exhausted that when meal time came the thought and sight of food has been repugnant. I have always taken it, however, and always to my full digestive ability. Luckily I have rarely been unable to take milk either in its natural condition or the fermented milk preparations. But too often I have gone to my arduous exhausting work insufficiently fed. I knew it as well as others, but I have done the best I could, and to have eaten more meant such physical distress that I could not. Had my father lived these things would not have been. My education would have been provided, and I would have been carefully watched and guarded. He always called me his boy; my only brother succumbed at the age of seven months to pneumonia, as has been told, and I was just as far as possible his constant companion. I read French with him every day when a small child. I learned to harness his horse into the doctor's buggy in which he drove long distances over the country from less than a mile to fifty and more on his professional visits, and was more than content if, when not too long a distance, I was asked to go along. He taught me to drive, and for miles and miles we would jog along, I with my feet hanging from the "buggy" seat, because my legs were not long enough to reach the floor, the reins in my hands, while my father talked with me, answered my questions or

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repeated to me the thought of the best writers whether in prose or verse. He had always been a student and an indefatigable reader.

Although we lived in a pioneer country, none but the best literature was provided. Books were few, for they cost money and we lived far from any centre. My daily companions were the Bible, Bible Dictionary, Shakespeare, Milton, Tom Moore, Burns, Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy which had slipped into the little collection of books somehow, the Scottish Chiefs Scott's novels, Fox's Book of Martyrs and later Dickens. I remember with what delight I listened in the long winter evenings to my father and also an uncle as they read aloud to the assembled family. Shakespeare was apt to furnish forth our intellectual feast, but I had great happiness in listening to Little Dorrit, while as a child the rhythm and story of Hiawatha as read by my father gave me great delight. Children's books I rarely had, and it was not until after my father's death and in my fifteenth year that I knew the delights of Grimm's Fairy Tales. The Little Pilgrim, published in Boston, was the children's magazine then and its periodical visits were more than welcome. The picture of the "Little Pilgrim" on the cover interested me greatly, but I wondered why he was represented with the toes of both feet squarely cut off. I know now that this was not true, but that the illusion was due to the very sturdy square toed

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shoes affected by the "Little Pilgrim". This magazine which was edited by Grace Greenwood was for a long time the delight of the children of this country.

I do not recall in all these years having notions about food, simply a persisting inability to take care of it because of my chronic fatigue. If fame to that extent were mine, I would with Voltaire be willing to give not only three hundred years, but eons of it for one good digestion. I mean to have it before I get through living. One of these days I am going to have a beautiful rest, days filled with content and happiness. That is the way happiness comes, through content and with the rest obtained from long days of repose spent in the open and enveloped in radiance with loving thought about me, I shall reap the aftermath of life's harvest. As in the life of every conscientious physician there are many who rise up to call me blessed, and in remembering their betterment, appreciation, gratitude even, I shall forget the hours, days, years of sordid effort, the periods of utter exhaustion accompanied oftentimes by so intense a desire for food that I have dreamed while snatching a few minutes' rest before going on of the most delicious beefsteak or of the country fried chicken of my childhood. No I could not eat either, and had to go on with the accustomed simple pabulum of which I was unutterably weary. This is all wrong. Not long since I was sought in my office by a man of

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prestige, position, wealth, because of his persistent malnutrition, and later at their residence I visited his wife who was equally impoverished and whose neuronic energy has been severely told upon by her lack of nutrition. In her case a tubercular taint had emphasized the trouble. I never lose sight of the gullibility of human nature, but I was impressed anew as to its degree and extent from my professional interviews with these two really very charming people. They seemed to have encompassed all the fads and cults extant in their search after health, after having exhausted the resources of their former regular attending physicians as well as new thought, mental healing, Christian Science on the psychical side, while on the dietary they have Fletcherized to their undoing. A few years since I took care of an elderly professional woman who, in the heyday of her life, had enjoyed the so-called good things of this earth to her satisfaction. In no way, perhaps, had she been more self-indulgent, than in the matter of food—a gourmand in fact. As the years slipped by, she came to have the usual untoward conditions which are pretty sure to follow in later life if youth and middle age have not been considerate of the chemism of life. This led to a cultivation of all kinds of fads and she Fletcherized almost to the point of inanition. Her flesh dropped off by the pounds, her digestion gave out and her nerves went all agley. She could not



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speaking without weeping and was practically impossible to live with, as her nurse and companion experienced daily. In directing her care and in response to her queries as to her dietary habit and methods, I said without embellishment, "For heaven's sake, doctor, be sensible. Chew your food, yes, and chew it well, but get away from fads. Do not be afraid of simple, wholesome, wellcooked food, but do not be a gourmand, nor yet an ascetic."

A more liberal diet was ordered, my advice taken, flesh regained and nerves lost their instability. Now! She had every chance, plenty of money, and nothing to do but to pleasure herself. A young man who knew her asked me what she did besides being a new thought devotee. I replied "cuts off coupons". She would have been better off with less selfish and more vital interests. Just so these charming people, man and wife, have in their effort to regain their health jeopardized their best interests by their quest of fads and their hourly watching themselves and weighing the pros and cons as to the merits and demerits of different articles of food.

I have a problem before me, but I mean to meet it and out of my own experience will come the knowledge which will serve their needs. To know how best to serve one's fellow man in the capacity of physician, hard as it is for oneself, is to have passed through the fiery furnace. I only know this, that with the abun-

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bant means and opportunity that they have, I would not with my mental attitude toward life, let many months pass before I should know a fair degree of health which means nutrition.

Radiance is all about me as I write this and the possibilities in the way of complete health with its opportunities rises before me alluringly. I would hie me away to a simple life in the country, they are twain and they should be content, or get on a Mediterranean steamer and sail on and on, taking still other steamers, forgetting nerves, stomachs and self in the beauty and delight of it all. Fresh air, radiance, changing scene, different peoples, but in the midst of it all never forgetting that the best cannot be obtained without giving thought to the needs of one's kind. Vital interests are necessary to health and nothing is more vital than living beings. So many need help of all sorts, interest, affection, companionship, as well as the more sordid wherewithal.

I can but wonder what would happen to these two, barring the tuberculous aspect, which while curable prejudices the case, if they had to take on my many duties and I could have their abundance. This one thing I know, I would have the most beautiful gorgeous time imaginable. There are so many for whom I should at once ease the financial way, not with an out-and-out gift—for that it seems to me is unwise—but with such an addition to their income as would



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make the way easier to the end of less fret, strain, carking care and therefore better health. What a life it would be—an inspiration that would last to the end of their and my days. There are ways of doing these things for others without injury to their inborn pride and independence.

This done then there are two charming young women, one a few years younger, the other just over the thirtieth milestone, both potential neurasthenes and both with the condition actually in evidence much of the time, because life's obligations have to be met out of a limited nerve reserve. They are not only capable and intelligent with well trained intellects, but in common with the rest of us psychical as well, not in any untoward way, but more of the soul than the material world. So keen and brilliant are they that one does not grow weary in their company and so appreciative of all good things that come their way as to give the keenest pleasure to the one that pleases them. They would immediately be commanded to be ready with the simplest wardrobe and accoutrement to sail away into a restful radiance for an unlimited absence and bade to leave all care behind. It would take me but a little time to cut off my interests, less to prepare for the journey and in it with this companionship, without care and work I should get rested and strong. Dear me, I have worked and waited for this all my life. I am said to obtain whatever I set

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my heart upon, therefore this must come and before I lose my perennial youth.

A physician who would meet the requirements of his calling in the highest sense, should in addition to his medical care of his patients, be able to tide them over financial difficulties as well, for to the physician usually confessions are made which lay bare the whole fabric of life and they know all the internal needs of those seeking advice.

Let multimillionaires, bent on bettering their kind and getting rid of some of their unnecessary wealth, for they cannot take it beyond, if beyond there be other than transformed energy, put their thought to this problem.

I began these pages in relation to diet, but in this wide divergence I have never lost sight of my theme and all that I have said bears an intimate relation thereto. After all, work that is not beyond one's strength, fatigue which is happy not sordid—there is such a vast difference between them and their influence upon the intelligence and spirit, how vast I only fully realized recently—is not harmful, but to the good of every living being.

It was morning and my office hour. There was every reason why I should be very tired and show the evidences of it in my countenance. There was no neuronc record of sordid fatigue—on the contrary. I was in conversation with a patient concerning her

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condition, when she suddenly interrupted her story, looked at me and said: "You don't look tired this morning, doctor, you look as though you had some beautiful memory or some pleasant expectancy." This was true, but I do not know what gave her the prescience to see it. It was something which I personally had not analyzed, and more I was entirely unconscious of the fact that I was carrying imprisoned in my countenance such a tell-tale record. There came to me like a flash a realization of the difference between sordid and happy fatigue. I had not so often known the latter as to have recognized this truth. Additionally I realized that I must set a guard upon my tell-tale face, not to shut out the happy look, but the one of fatigue and care which she had noted and with which she contrasted the one that suggested a beautiful memory or some pleasant expectancy. There would be more such happy facial records, did we more often lend the helping hand all along the way according to our abundance and in so doing, the literal as well as the figurative weight would be lifted from the solar plexus and good digestion would more often wait upon appetite as well as the latter be healthfully stimulated.

## CHAPTER FIVE

*"The trouble with you, doctor, is that you have sprained your brain."*

I HAD been working very hard and steadily. There had been no let up nothing to lighten the burdens I was carrying financial or professional. My environment had reached a degree of supersaturation with the pains and problems of life.

In addition to an active private practice commanding the best energies of mind and body, I did a great deal of clinical work and threw myself into it heart and soul. I served the different organizations of which I was a member as chairman of committees, as secretary, and as president, while executive work was sure to find me sooner or later. In addition there was a great deal of teaching as well as writing. My clinical work brought me in contact with the host of chronic conditions for which people seek relief, and especially nerve conditions. The universality of my human interest brought me the confidences of all of them, the most intimate even, and with the tales of suffering as well as by reason of illness and lack of independent means life was to me a veritable Gethse-

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mane. Of course this was the time that grief and trouble came, and the heat of summer told severely upon my small reserve.

An opportunity presented itself for the doing of a piece of work in collaboration with another. This involved careful research and constant hours of labor in order to complete it at the time promised. A patient, long since gone to her rest had placed at my disposition her ancestral home, over a hundred years old, on a beautiful island in the beautiful Sound of Long Island as it slips away to the sea. In July with my servants and secretary I took possession. All my papers, data and books of reference accompanied me, and as soon as the household was organized and settled to the requirements of our Robinson Crusoe sort of life—for we were absolutely isolated, having no neighbors save only the boatmen who carried us back and forth to the main land—I got to work. Every morning we rose early and immediately upon the completion of breakfast—by half past seven always—I began my labors. Hour after hour I toiled interested beyond words in what I was doing and unconscious of the fact that I was hour by hour exhausting my nerve centres. I always suspended work for a time in the afternoon to give my secretary a rest. During this interim it was my custom to lie down, but I rarely slept not even at night. I was profoundly anaemic, white as the driven snow almost, and cared nothing



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for food. There was never a moment's freedom from pain, nor had there been for a year. An injury to a nerve trunk of an upper extremity had initiated the vicious circle which my grief, overwork, and impaired physical condition perpetuated. Every nerve trunk hurt from morning until night, but especially from night to morning. I could not always control myself and many times have had no resource but to voice my distress in a subdued moaning. My bed room was sufficiently remote from the others that I could safely indulge in this luxury of expression without disturbing any one.

Before the summer was spent, a friend a trained nurse, came to spend a few days with me. Her room adjoined mine, and I was betrayed into an expression of pain as it got beyond my power of control. Instantly she was on the alert and wanted to know if she should not come in and give me a gentle massage. It was my right sciatic nerve which was in such evidence, as it had been for many weary sleepless nights, and finally after a long time I said she might if she would be very gentle. I had never been able to take massage even from the most skilled operators, nor when I was in fair health as it always left me limp and exhausted, while the presence of another and the personal touch was, and for that matter is a pain beyond words. The morning following the rubbing found me haggard, limp and worse. I went to the City,



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however, to keep a professional appointment, but found it extremely difficult to meet the day's duties and return to my island home. For once I was glad there was a self-reliant person under my roof, although in response to her inquiry at bed time if she should not rub me, I said by no means. The anguish of nerve pain and exhaustion was well nigh beyond me and the vibrations of another personality so intimately close was beyond my power of endurance. The dampness inseparable from our island home served to still further depress me, and every vestage of my color disappeared. Twice since I have tried summers on the north shore of Long Island Sound, but each autumn has found me profoundly anaemic and suffering an accentuation of my nerve exhaustion. This experience renders me cautious in the matter of sending neurasthenic patients to the shores of land-locked bodies of water, especially the north shores. A sojourn on the south shore of the Sound or the north shore of Long Island was never accompanied by such complete lowering of vital resistance.

But I did not give up my work. I had been brought up with the stern sense of duty—mistaken oftentimes—which characterized my Puritan ancestors. To have given a promise that I would do the work upon which I was engaged and have it done at a certain time was to me like the laws of the Medes and Persians absolutely unalterable. There was no other

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course to be entertained for one moment. The six weeks for which I had accepted the house gradually drew near their close. I was to stay until the first of September. Before that date I began to feel very strangely, but I relaxed none of my effort in bringing my work to completion. Finally there came to me a sense of dread and terror beyond my comprehension. My eyes caught the muscles of my colorless hands quivering one day similarly it seemed to me as the fibrillary contraction of a progressive muscular atrophy. I was saturated with the atmosphere of organic nerve conditions clinically as well as in the work I had been doing. It struck terror to my heart despite the fact that I had often been so worn as to have other muscles quiver, but I never before had known the strange incomprehensible feeling of desolation and danger. There was no one I could ask to come to me save my nurse friend. I wrote and also telegraphed, asking her to come on a definite train Saturday afternoon, but giving no time for an answer. I felt that I could brook no delay. Saturday forenoon I worked with my secretary, bringing everything into final shape. Just before I started in the boat for the main land to meet the train I tried to give her a final paragraph, but after stumbling about in my mind as to its proper phrasing, I said, "Never mind that is all, finish your typewritten copy, put the MSS. all neatly together in proper sequence, pack up

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all these books ready to be sent back and have neither book nor paper in evidence upon my return." Then I wearily walked to the water's edge, stepped into the boat, and the boatman took up his oars and pulled across the Sound. All was beauty about me, everything was full of the joy of life, but I could not feel it. I knew it was all there, that everything was just the same, but I had neither part nor parcel in it. I was glad my work was done, simply because I could not strive any longer.

We reached the main land and I waited at the station for the train I had specified. Upon its arrival I closely scanned every figure and face, looking long after there was a reasonable hope, and when I found my friend had not come it seemed to me that I could no longer endure. I felt like a rat caught in a trap. There was no way out, and I had looked forward to unburdening myself to her feeling that her experience, training and unusual fund of common sense would enable her to say something comforting or suggest what I should do. There was nothing to do but to patiently endure. I went back to the Island glad of the presence of my servants and secretary, but I did not impose my burden upon them. Horror-stricken as I was, helpless as I felt, I could not impose upon their youth and inexperience my mental anguish.

The next morning I asked them if they could take the responsibility of putting the house to rights, pack-

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ing belongings and shutting it up. They assured me that it would all be done as I wished. I then tried to pack my trunk. All my life I had served my own needs and the additional horror I felt when I could not lift an article to place it in the trunk, could not stand, seemed more than could be endured. Such a sense of shame I felt when I had to call my secretary and ask her to pack it for me. She was untravelled and had not the slightest conception of how a trunk should be packed. I sat down on the floor by the side of it and laboriously directed the doing of what had always been a pleasure and pastime.

In the Sunday evening's sunset glow the boatman took me and my belongings to the station on the main land and put me on the train. Arriving in the City I went to a hotel where a friend permanently resided. I had telephoned her to secure me a room. She tried to reassure me, but her words brought no comfort. The next morning after my breakfast I went to my office and looked up the addresses of my neurological friends. I selected the names and addresses of three well known men. One has long since gone beyond the other two are living. I reached my decision as to the one I should consult by a process of elimination and, save for a brief time to which I shall refer later on, I have never regretted my decision. I went to his office and sent in my card. He saw me as soon as possible, and in advance of other patients. I knew

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him, but not in any intimate sense. I told him all this tale of woe, of my past life, of the blows received upon my head at the hands of insane patients, of a sunstroke and overwork with much responsibility immediately following, answered all his questions, and when I felt that I had laid bare my soul to the professional confessor, when my heart had been examined and my pulse felt, he looked at me quizically and said, "The trouble with you, doctor, is that you have sprained your brain." Well, even though I had, and an eminent authority had told me so, the outlook was not so hopeless because of his cheerful optimism and his kindly humor. He took a specimen of my blood, told me what I was to do, prescribed for me, and told me to report the following day but one. I left him reassured although inadequate, and returned to the hotel for a day or two until the return of the servants. His directions were absolutely obeyed. Upon my return after the morning greeting and a question or two he said, "I examined that bit of gore you left the other day, and I thought it was Croton water."

The secretary and servants came home and my apartment was opened. After a few days I discharged all save one to keep the apartment in order wait upon the door, and resumed my work.

Meanwhile I had for the time permanently placed myself in one of the best of the City hotels by my physician's suggestion and desire. "You need to see



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a different side of life". Dear me, I had never seen anything but grind, sickness and suffering, had never known want, but had never known what it was to be free from perpetual struggle for the wherewithal. There had been storm and stress always, no peaceful anchorage, but I never lost courage. The hotel life was in lighter vein, offsetting the tragedies of the conscientious physician's life. Work proceeded wearily enough, but I managed to do it and gradually grew stronger. After three months I went back to the house and home keeping keeping up as well my professional work. Promptly upon this change came a most appalling attack of grippe. This was for years thereafter a constantly recurring experience and kept me with lowered vitality nearly all of the time.

I had always known interesting, brainy people and had many warm friends among them. At this juncture there were several men with keen, intellectual minds among the scientific people I knew. I saw much of them, and my restless, active, daring brain was stimulated to the highest point of activity. Scientific experimental work was begun which I never had strength to finish. Others have taken up the same line of work and brought it to a satisfactory conclusion, mine remains only a bit of wreckage on life's tempestuous sea.

My physician believed most thoroughly in exercise and I was directed to take bicycle lessons, and as soon



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as possible got out into the open. Here is where mistakes are apt to be made in the care of neurasthenic patients. Had I been a neurasthene by reason of imperfect chemical changes due to overindulgence, had I had had habits other than those of work and insufficient eating, in a word, had I been toxic instead of exhausted, and prone to coddle myself, a symptomatic instead of an essential neurasthene, the advice would have been good. He did not know me well, and a physician who sees much of functional neuroses is apt to become very skeptical in his estimate of character, and I have a habit of always appearing at my best in the presence of an intelligent and congenial personality. At any rate, I was told to take lessons and ride. I obeyed although I fell off my wheel from sheer exhaustion again and again. The result was disastrous. I should have been counselled to spend every hour not needed for my duties in a hammock, preferably out of doors. But this was impracticable in the city and in the apartments in which I was living.

The spring following the "spraining of my brain" I began doing very arduous and responsible dispensary work, teaching clinically at the same time. I moved into a house from the apartment, which meant greater stress and strain on my part, although giving me the comforts and pleasure in my surroundings to which I had always been accustomed.

These changes were made in the interest of pro-

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fessional advancement. I threw myself into my work and studies with an abandon of interest. Untoward happenings distress, depress and disturb me most keenly always, but they also arouse my fighting instincts. This time was no exception, but I did not reckon with my limited reserve of stored up energy. While there was replacement, it was not sufficient to stand the physical, mental and particularly financial strain of a life like mine. I had been shaken to the foundation by these untoward happenings, my trust and confidence in my fellow beings had been destroyed. When I told all the story to my physician, knowing how much it had had to do with my utter break, he looked at me gravely and asked, "Do you mean to tell me doctor, that you believe and trust the people about you that you have faith in human nature?" "Why, doctor," I said, "if I did not have faith in human nature, if I did not trust others, I could not live." I had lived long enough to know life, but I did not. I learned lessons then which have left an indelible impress. Meanwhile I am aware that in my work—nothing else—I lived at the top of my speed. The active minds about me stimulated mine to greater effort. I was happy in my work and in it I forgot my sensitive aching body and the hard blows life had rained upon me. I cared nothing for food and took no pleasure. My patients received my utmost devotion. I have often been told that I spoilt them by

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my devotion. Perhaps I have, but they are my family and my friends. I have none other, and science is my mistress.

Following my convalescence from the attack of grippe referred to, I did not see my physician in that capacity for over a year, nor did I tell him of the extra work I was taking on. I do not know why, but I am not sure but that I felt he would discourage me and I simply had to do it. The impelling force within me, which is always driving me at full speed, would not down. To me it is infinitely better to wear than to rust. Inactivity is stagnation. As I write these pages, I am living at top speed and white heat. Is it good for me? That depends upon what we regard as our best entity. If it is mind, not body providing we may for the nonce separate them, then it is. Still I know perfectly well now how far I dare go. I did not then. Even now I would not be awakening neuronal memory of pain, sleeplessness, mental anguish, impaired physical strength, if I had not a purpose in it not only the one named in the first pages, but another and a better one, to show if possible that a life may be usefully spent even though tremendously handicapped, and that happiness and content may be secured though one may only walk in the busy arena of life through the medium of books and one or two friends. Social functions always palled upon me. The next morning I was sure to feel a sense of disgust and

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repletion, if I may so express it. Not so a quiet chat, or even silence with a congenial friend. I like the charm of people, their manysided repartee and sword play, the scenario of brilliant social occasions, the lit of the music, and the poetry of beautiful dancing, but more than a glimpse of it is sure to leave me with a sense of disgust. I think this has almost always been so. It is not true of the quiet fireside talks, because I do not invite into my own environment other than congenial souls. Yes! there is a loss. I realize that, but not so great a loss as there would be, if I spent my time in vainly regretting an undue and unjustifiable expenditure of precious nerve energy from the effect of attending functions, whether social or for the purpose of amusement. Work was and is second nature. It meant not only the means of living, but life the power to do and to be.

## CHAPTER SIX

*"To his capable Ears Silence was Music from the Holy Spheres."*

KEATS, ENDYMION.

*"Nature compensates those whose world is restricted with an ability for Concentration and Intensity of Effort of which the average Person is ignorant."*

**I**N less than two years of seeking the services of my physician the first time I was again in need. I had worked hard but successfully, and had not worry and financial strain, caused in this instance by the dishonesty of others come into my life, I might possibly have been spared the final crash. But—Kismet—it was not to be. I did not for a long time consult my physician. I had a feeling that I must not trespass upon his busy moments, for I knew how necessary it was to use one's energy for remunerative work, and his courtesy to me in these ways had been of the finest. At the time I was taking care of several physician patients, as I almost always am, in this instance all men, as well as the several members of a physician's family besides my clinical work without money or price, and I knew exactly what it meant. Finally the



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father of two young women patients in whom I was much interested, who saw my great need, urgently advised me to ask the doctor's advice again. I summoned up my courage and went once more to see him. Again he put forth every effort to save me from absolute disaster, but the weary days lengthened from May into June, until one day I was told that I need not come to him again, that he would come to me and that I should spare myself every effort.

I was in constant and severe pain. There was not a nerve trunk but cried out night and day with the anguish of it all. The sense of cerebral and spinal exhaustion was extreme, and to make it all worse there was congestion of the sensory cortex which made me intolerant of the vibrations of light and sound, in fact—the external world—but I could not get away from them. Had it not been for the financial losses to which I have just referred, I could have stopped before it was too late—perhaps. At this time I seemed to never sleep, the mental and physical anguish were too great, my eyes were ever ready to fill with tell-tale tears, my nights were spent in weeping and my days in hard work, giving to others in trouble all I had of strength and courage. Yes! I know it was wrong—I did not then. Life has had to teach it to me. I had my own Sinai to climb before I learned it. Who does not? No one profits by the



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experience of others. Generations and generations come and go, but each and every individual must learn their own lesson.

There was constantly the sensation of hot blood pouring into my right ear at this time and its lobe would become very red in marked contrast to my face which was so white, that on several occasions medical men of my acquaintance had exclaimed when they saw me, "Good God! Doctor, how white you are." I could not seem to get over my persistent anaemia. This sensation in my ear was most trying and often, in adjusting myself to the needs of my patients in making examinations or otherwise, it was so extreme that it seemed to me nothing could keep the circulation within bounds, that it must break through the enclosing walls of blood vessels and surrounding tissues. I was exposed at this time, both by the nature of my professional work and the city-walled environment of my home, to the stress and strain of constant noise. The effect was almost maddening, but I could not get away from it and continue my work. My Puritan and Scotch ancestry must always be remembered and also my early training in connection with my Casabianca-like treading of the burning deck. Had I done differently, it would not have been myself, but, oh the pity of it all, I sometimes think. This, however, is in my moments of self-indulgence and coddling, which are rare indeed, still they come. I do

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not pretend to know what all this life means, but I cannot believe it means to simply think of self. If, however, disregard of self means creating conditions which are prejudicial to others, then it is the most wrong and selfish course of conduct one can pursue. I think I can say with honesty that no one has suffered because of my condition, save my faithful and overworked physician, and he is gracious enough to say that he has not felt it in that way. My mother and family friends were never told. They lived nearly two thousand miles away and knew only what I chose to tell.

Prior to the time of "spraining my brain," I had a very severe attack of neuritis involving my right arm, and had to give up the use of my pen for fully a year. My dear mother used to send me by my sister this message, "I do hope you will be able to write before long, for the typewritten letters do not sound like you." To this day this is true, that the presence of a stenographer disturbs the poise and rhythm of my thought processes to such an extent that work done in that way is always most unsatisfactory, unless it be simply a business letter. This moment I am recording this story with my own pen, as I do all of my writing even from a hundred or two to eight hundred or more pages. My mother was simply told that I had overtired my arm and hand—she was not told what I am laying bare to the world. Nor were my

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friends. My patients saw me from day to day, and as they not only accepted but sought my services, I evidently did not fail them in their need. This is true, that I have not only held, but increased my practice and income, despite my handicap, but at the expense of myself.

At the same time that the conditions detailed in regard to pain, sleeplessness, congestion of my sensory cortex, with profound circulatory disturbances and the sensation of hot blood pouring into my ear with great weakness especially of right side, I had a constantly recurring dream out of which I always wakened in a condition of terror and which left me shaken and trembling for hours dreading with a nameless dread to go to sleep again. This was of a mad cat gnawing at my head always at the one spot and that directly over the middle lobe of the right half of my brain. Why a mad cat I do not know any more than I can understand why a medical man, also a neurasthene should have a dream of a vampire fastening itself upon him at the base of the brain, nor why that vampire should take the form and features of a medical man of his acquaintance. In both instances the distress was great. While I had no penchant for cats and had been told in a laughing conversation by one of my scientific friends that he could conceive nothing in common with mine and the feline nature, still I did not dislike them. I had owned two in the course of

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my life. The one Daniel Deronda and the other Benjamin Franklin, but their care and petting had always been left to the servants.

There was left me for several years an utter horror at the presence of a cat. I did not need to be told that there was one in the house, I knew it instinctively. No! I cannot say how in other words than I have, a nameless indescribable horror and terror. Luckily there was no opportunity of giving way to this feeling, but I never lost it entirely until I became the welcome and honored guest on occasional "week ends" at the home of friends and patients as well. I had taken care of three generations in this family and they endeared themselves to me in many ways. Among the household pets were two beautiful tiger cats, "Flossie" and "Billie", the latter christened William Napoleon by the eldest daughter whose sunny presence has often been good for me. These cats were of such goodly proportions that when lying before the immense fire place of the noble drawing room, they almost gave the appearance of a hearth-rug. They were enjoyable in every way and I shall never forget our merriment and delight over their catnip "jag." It was inimitable. So intimately were they associated with the family that they were permitted to perch upon the backs of the chairs about the table in the dining room at meal time. Billie was the especial favorite of his mistress, the eldest daugh-

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ter, Flossie of her intimate girl friend and oftentime guest. Both Billie and Flossie had the most engaging habit of laying a detaining paw on one's shoulder, arm, hand, or cheek even, when a choice bit of food was being conveyed to one's mouth at meal time. They were simply irresistible and I soon found that I too wanted to pet and feed them. The elemental in my nature responded to that in theirs. Their requests were preferred so simply and gently that it was difficult to refuse, as ever and anon we all had to, when the head of the house had one of his moods as to the perfect fitness of things and the implicit obedience of his family. For the most part he was oblivious by reason of his many business and other interests. One day he laughingly said to me, when Billie was getting what he had so fascinatingly asked: "Doctor, this family is spoiling you". But I guess not. However, since my intimacy with Flossie and Billie I have lost my aversion to cats. The twain are such wholesome cats and more than all so loved and respected. To see the family about the table at which one or more guests are always present with these beautiful animals perched on the backs of their accustomed chairs, or if rebuffed by one, which rarely happens, making the rounds from one chair to another, stopping where they have reason to believe they will be most kindly treated, is a beautiful picture. After all we are no better than they, and who knows what a cat thinks.



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As for the dear old mongrel, part collie, when he lays his nose along my knees, I feel that I have, at least one worshipper at my shrine, and am always reminded of the saying that the dog as he sits on his haunches, looking into the face of man with a look of adoration, regards his master as a god. Just so this collie is in the habit of regarding me.

The last time I recall having this dream was the second night I spent in Paris and the one preceding my going to Fontainebleau. It was also the most vivid and terrifying of all my experiences, and left so profound and intolerable an impression that when morning came, I put the few things back I had removed from my travelling bag, notified the landlady that I should not want the room, ordered a carriage, went to Cook's office and secured the hotel address at Fontainebleau, the story of which will be told later on, leaving on the first train. At this juncture almost thirteen years later, it gives me a feeling of momentary terror to recall that room and night. Unquestionably there was an increase of congestion from the effort made to reach Paris from Cologne and to secure comfortable quarters in the former city at moderate expense. It was soon after this and while still at Fontainebleau that I began to suffer from the most severe pain in the right side of my head, to the front and over the cranial vault. This was so severe as to exhaust me and was so piercing, boring and agonizing,



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that I could not dismiss it as neuralgic as I would now. It was of that character, but it indicated a serious trouble as time has shown.

Two years later the trouble in my right ear about my mastoid and right side of head increased in severity. The disturbed circulation was constantly in evidence, the right ear and right side of my face at times intensely flushed. I had had a vasomotor disturbance ever since I exhausted that centre along with the others, and in so far as it disturbed my general cerebral circulation, I was in the habit of dismissing it with the flippant statement that my vasomotor center had slipped its trolley. But this was different and seemed to be a distinct disturbance by itself. Finally one evening when my physician was paying his customary visit—I in my hammock as usual—I told him of some of the sensations I experienced and the great distress I suffered because of them. He asked was there any impairment of hearing. I said I did not know, that I had never tested it. While I observed the different phenomena characteristic of my condition, there was no undue dwelling upon them. Life was too intent, too full of work and duty to spend time in this way. I asked him for his watch, as mine was upstairs, that I might test it. The watch was given me and I listened carefully first with the left ear and then with the right which had forced itself so obtrusively into my consciousness. No, I said, I

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can detect no difference. But the mischief was there all the same. Of course, it was the most natural thing for the doctor to regard the circulatory disturbance in and about my ear as the usual neurasthenic hyperasthensia, and later on when the hearing began to perceptibly diminish, as evidenced by the most exacting tests, it was set down to the customary auditory fatigue. I felt that I knew better, and after all patients have not only oftentimes a very much better idea of existing conditions than their physicians, but have contrary to the usual attitude of the latter certain rights even though patients. It seemed very strange to me that this dear good patient doctor of mine could not understand exactly what I suffered and the extent of disability which I recognized. But he did not. However, it made no difference in my feeling of trust and confidence, for I had been guided through such tempestuous seas and over danger lurking shoals, as to be very grateful, and while longing to be well and to get rid of my distressing symptoms, I was after all, content for life though handicapped was rich in its relation to knowledge and to my work. There was less physical pleasure in radiant mornings and evening time than now, while my lack of physical strength kept me from an out of door life or from living any differently than in the quiet of my home, when the day's duties were ended. Still, there were moments when his utter dis-

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belief in any trouble with my precious sense of hearing gave me a sense of injustice which hurt and rankled. But some humorous remark would appeal to the like quality in myself and I would let the matter drop, although as time went on, the tinnitus or confusion of sounds became almost insupportable. As indicated, I was during these years exposed to almost incessant noise which unquestionably tended to the exhaustion of my sound centre. The blood seethed and boiled as though in a caldron over a red hot furnace fire, bells rang, cymbals clashed, and there was the constant undercurrent of roaring as in the sea shell. These might all have been the usual neurasthenic symptoms, but they were not. There was great pain in my ear, deep in all along the tract of the auditory nerve and the entire mastoid area was exquisitely sensitive as was the entire right side of my head and sometimes the left as well. Even so, my fears of disaster were not recognized and several times when I had made a more strenuous and pitiful appeal than usual, he teasingly whispered—"Hysteria." My feeling of hurt and indignity was extreme, I felt I could never forgive him, then there would come the memory of all he had done for me, all he had meant for it is no small thing to go down to the depths of such utter exhaustion of supreme centres as I had done, and the one who had walked

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through that valley and shadow, was not one to be vexed with because of a laughing remark.

Time slipped by the trouble increased, I knew neither peace nor comfort night nor day. There remained all the usual pain of nerve trunks of peripheral nerve endings, the exquisite sensitiveness of body, the inability to bear a touch heavier than the brush of a butterfly's wing, the insomnia, lack of strength, the recurrence of depression of spirits, the inability to use my brain at my study and writing as I wished (I used it much of the time however), but this trouble with my auditory centre and nerve of which I never lost sight. I could not. It was from five to six years after my complete crash and subsequent to an acute illness that there was an accentuation of all the symptoms. The confusion of sounds increased, the disturbed circulation was not only evidenced by my senses, but to the onlooker by the crimsoning of my ear and the same side of my face. This unilateral flushing was often very marked emphasizing the pallor of the opposite side. My hearing continued to diminish while the temperature of the entire right side of my head as well as of my mastoid area was perceptibly increased to sense of touch. A surface thermometer was not used. While I regard all measures of exact observation and record as of absolute necessity in medical work, and use them, I often recall a talk with my preceptor in the very first of my

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medical life. I was telling him of a patient to the end of having his counsel, when I spoke with some emphasis of the thermometric reading. At this moment I do not recall the case, save that I seem to remember it as one of those where the experienced physician would recognize the little value of the thermometric reading as compared with the entire clinical picture. He said, "Doctor, do not place too much importance upon your thermometer. There are so many other clinical conditions to receive recognition and which tell so much more of truth." By his analysis of the case and its symptoms with his accustomed clearness and force of diction, I was taught a clinical lesson that has served me well in all my years of work. Exactness and precision in observation are essential, but successful medicine means so much more.

The entire clinical picture of this trouble in and about my right ear never failed to say to me that there was no question of a simple circulatory hyperesthesia with auditory fatigue. The distress increased to such an extent that I felt I must have some advice in relation to it and went to my oculist who had a few years before devoted himself to the care of both eye and ear, one of the most absurd specialties in medicine, for if the ear should be specialized it should preferably be done with nose and throat because of their intimate anatomical and physiological connection. Of



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this I am confident that to no one should the intimate anatomy, physiology and pathology of the ear be regarded as so absolutely an essential part of their fundamental grounding as to the neurologist and psychiatrist. The psychic symptoms of aural disturbances are tremendous. A medical man whom I knew by sight only, but of whom I knew a good deal, constantly evidenced great irritability irascibility and mental confusion as the result of a middle ear trouble. His symptoms at times were so extreme as to lead to the remark "of course he is crazy". At such times he was pretty nearly unbalanced, threatened to kill himself, got very angry and abusive and was altogether an objectionable person. At other times he was quiet and gentlemanly. So long as no untoward act is committed, his peculiarities will receive no other recognition than a pitying remark as to his suffering and the cause for it. That man I was sorry for although his nature was such as to make no appeal to me whatever. But I have some idea of the torture he suffered, although my experience has not changed my mental characteristics or interfered with the integrity of my intelligence. Yes! This exception—if I am exposed to constant and exhausting noise, it is difficult not to be irritable, or if too exacting demands are made upon my time and energies; while the subsequent exhaustion which is extreme, is with difficulty recovered from in the limited time at my command.

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I sought my oculist, because I could not endure the thought of going to a stranger and telling all my story again and more than that the personal qualities of the physician whose professional advice I seek means so much to me that given several physicians of practically the same attainments I always select the one whose honesty of purpose and conduct, single-minded devotion to the best in his profession and life sets him above his fellows. He knew of all my disasters. I had told them from time to time seriously enough for him to understand, but always concluding with some joking or flippant remark. What is the use of crying—it does no good. We have to take of life what it gives us and on the rebound from trouble and disability there is pretty sure to be some compensation, for that is the law of life. Circumstances are often beyond the control of man, but conduct is in his power.

My ear was carefully put through its paces. The result confirmed my own. The hearing was very much impaired for distant sounds and practically nil for the watch test. The pain had been that of an intense neuritis, there had been present all the symptoms of a neuritis of the auditory nerve as well as in the auricular nerves. This trouble dated back to the "Spraining" of my brain, as recorded, for at that time I began to have periods of tasting and smelling phosphorus, which would last for several days then

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disappear. I have seen this in some authority set down as a symptom of nerve trouble within the labyrinth and auditory canal. More than that the noises to which I was constantly exposed without reserve of neuron energy, tired and exhausted me beyond endurance. There was every reason why the sound center should suffer.

The first winter, following my complete crash I was returning from my clinic one evening in company with one of my assistants when we found it had suddenly grown very cold. The wind blew a gale and struck the right side of my face and right ear with an intensity of cold and pressure I had never before experienced from exposure to the weather. He placed himself between me and the wintry blast at my request for I felt such exposure presaged mischief. That was the side which had been so weak all the previous summer as to lead me to anticipate a facial paralysis. But paralysis, nor sudden death, nor yet organic disease, save this damaged auditory nerve are evidently not to be my portion. I have known the utter weakness of all my right side from exhaustion of my left motor centers, have received violent blows on my head at the hands of insane patients, have suffered a sunstroke, a ruptured ankle ligament, an injury to my spine from catching the heel of my slipper in going down a flight of stairs, have been knocked down by an automobile and had three ribs broken, a foot con-

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tused, suffered from shock, damage to my best frock and the ignominy of injured dignity from having to be picked up in the street where I lay biting the dust so to speak, as well as the further indignity of having an ambulance recommended, which I indignantly refused and ordered a hansom while two mounted policemen escorted me to my apartment. What more is necessary to show that I am not to be killed, not to be paralyzed, not to suffer organic disease, nor to have the integrity of my gray matter interfered with. It does seem as though fate had preordained my life. Despite all my early training I believe I am just as much a fatalist as is the Mohamedan.

But the mischief went on and on, the congestion in and temperature of the right half of my head was sensibly increased, while the sensitiveness of my right ear, mastoid area and right side of my head and face became so extreme that I could not lie upon that side and rarely even now. Down pillows had to be substituted for feathers and the sheerest fabrics for pillow slips in place of the ordinary muslin or linen. So great was the heat in my head that I had to turn my pillow ten, fifteen or twenty times a night to be comfortable, according as to whether I kept ice caps on or not. Leeches were applied, but there was no middle ear trouble, nothing save the mischief in the auditory nerve. There was not only cutaneous hyperesthesia, but anesthesia all about the ear. There was

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also at one time the most excruciating and severe facial spasm lasting for days and because of which I came very near having my teeth extracted on that side. But my own desire to conserve my anatomical integrity, which had always been great was encouraged in this instance, because my dentist who had looked after such needs as I had had for years referred all patients requiring the removal of teeth to a surgeon dentist and I felt that I could not for one moment allow the intervention of a stranger even though recommended by one in whom I had confidence. Time has shown that it would have been a mistake to have had them removed. I had had and was having a summer of great strain, grief and anxiety. I had taken a Queen Anne cottage not far from my city home in a secluded and restricted park, furnished, for the summer months and when domiciled had yielded an assent to the request of a very dear old gentleman—a patient whom I knew could not long survive his accumulation of chronic difficulties—and his sister to spend three weeks with me in my suburban home in transit from their sojourn at one of the most desirable of spring resorts to their summer place in the White Mountains. My dear nurse was in charge of the patient and I felt with her to aid and abet my effort I could do it, have the quiet and pure air of the country, look after my office practice and at the same time carry the extra financial



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burden which I had assumed more easily than without this extra income.

As the end of the three weeks approached my patients asked me, if I would not keep them two weeks longer. I was very worn and hesitated, but finally consented for his personal appeal was very gracious and he had from the first won my sympathy and kindly regard. The day they were to have gone originally the nurse fell ill with a peritoneal inflammation, and for two weeks longer I had all three and a second nurse in my little cottage. At the end of the extra two weeks the patient and his sister left, also the nurse attendant upon my nurse. She had not been satisfactory and instead my nurse's sister came and we devoted ourselves to getting the patient on her feet again. It was ultimately accomplished, but in my thought I attended her funeral services every morning on my way to the city as I passed the suburban cemetery, and every evening upon my return.

The extra strain incident upon the routine professional duties in my city office, the professional care of the patient, the duties of hostess and director of the house had been enough, but the serious illness of my dear nurse and all its attendant care and anxiety sapped every bit of my vitality and this time in addition to the usual phenomena of utter exhaustion of nerve energy was this excruciating facial spasm. It would call me up standing while engaged with a patient or

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the many physicians who sought my advice and instruction. These latter could not always be lied to even though I covered the right side of my face with my hand that the anguish of pain might not be noticed. In order therefore that no comment might be made nor anything thought of it I flippantly said that it was simply an indication that I was indulging in meditation and prayer. We can always better afford to laugh at our physical infirmities, than have our little world pity us. In my youthful days I had known a young man of brilliant mind and attractive personality who was hunchbacked from a spinal condition in earlier life. His deformity was marked and he often suffered agonies of pain especially at night. But he never flinched nor lessened his exterior of courage and bravery. Sometimes as a relief to his extreme sensitiveness regarding his condition I have heard him ask his closest friend—a man—before a coterie of gay young people if he knew why he was so misshapen, and without pause reply that his mother let him fall into the water when he was a child and upon being laid out to dry, he warped. He said this in the midst of a company of the gayest of gay young people, of whom I was one, one night when laughter and merriment was universal. The laughter died on my lips and tears filled my eyes, though no one knew, at the pathos of it all. Just so I have turned my many disabilities into a joke and gone on. It is much better

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so. Life at best is a tragedy and yet as I say it, I see the farce, comedy, the melodrama, so keenly that I cannot let the remark stand without this modification. And withal it is so beautiful—so elementally beautiful.

The troubles of this summer were lived through, although my winter was prejudiced by the summer's stress. The dear old gentleman died in the following spring, and my devoted nurse who returned to him as soon as she was able cared for him to the last and in the absence of his family friends administered to his last moments in so beautiful a way that her memory is cherished by them as lovingly as by myself.

To this day I suffer in untoward barometrical conditions, associated of necessity with lack of radiance, from the most intense pain within that auditory canal and great sensitiveness, even soreness in all the external parts just as I do in my right sciatic nerve. The tinnitus never ceases, the hearing is practically nil, to the speaking voice and entirely to the watch test. At one time I had a very severe attack of *labyrinthine* vertigo, after that the evidences of injury were more marked. It is known only to half a dozen people, whose intimate association with me has led to its observance.

That blessed doctor could not for a long time realize it, but does now and makes up not in sympathy nor talk, but in friendship for his earlier lack of ap-

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preciation of my condition. He is in no sense to blame, the combination of conditions is most unusual, practically unknown and nothing would have saved me save a long and peaceful rest, summers and winters in beautiful dry, fragrant pine woods or the latter in sunny lands with congenial friends about me as well as the comforts of life. These are things which one can always command by well directed effort, but they require money. Mine I had to work for, the daily need I had to meet and one dares not especially in a big city let go their foothold for one or more years. Even had I done this there was no balance on my side to defray the expense of those years. Lack of ill-health is an almost universal cause of poverty in the world's history. Poverty is not mine, but on the contrary. Still, had I given up all I can see would have been a dependent and more or less friendless old age. Instead I am free, and should I drop out to-day, I would leave my sole dependents sufficient without aught else to care for them the rest of their lives for in common with many others I am worth more dead than alive, but the fruition of my hopes is not far away. This bad ear will be mine to the end of my days, and since the injury sustained to my head in the two successive attacks of syncope which I have recorded, I am more than careful of my preternaturally sharp left ear. This disability in addition to the lack of a reserve of neuronic energy necessarily restricts

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my world, but I can honestly say not my usefulness, nor on the other hand my happiness and content. Towards the voices of my friends and towards all beautiful sounds I turn my open ear just as one should always keep the windows of one's soul and intelligence open to the dawn, whether it be the physical one of radiance or the intellectual one of truth. This moment as I write, a little city-bred sparrow is piping his spring time matin lay near the window towards which my appreciative sound center is turned. Nature compensates always and rewards those whose world is restricted with an ability for concentration and intensity of effort of which the average person is ignorant. This ability for concentration and intensity of purpose characterized that greatest of English poets, John Milton. For fourteen years his eye sight was failing and for the last nineteen years of his life he was totally blind. Yet these years were prolific of some of his greatest works, the famous epics of "Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained;" the tragedy "Samson Agonistes", while *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* were written during the time that his eye sight was failing. Michel Angelo strove by indulging his solitary tastes to maintain his central energies intact for art "joining in no rebellious conspiracies against the powers that be, bending his neck in silence to the storm, avoiding pastimes and social diversions which might have called into activity the latent sensuousness



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of his nature. He seems to have purposely sought by the seclusion and renunciations of a life time, self-coherence, self-concentration, not for any mean or self-indulgent spirit, but for the best attainment of his intellectual ideas." These things are not possible when one is constantly in evidence and life would have lost much of its charm had I been denied my lonely hours on the heights and in company with the choicest minds and spirits of those who live in the expression of the best within themselves, whether in art, music, science or literature. In books which I love as a girl loves her lovers, "as in a vial are preserved the purest efficacy and extraction of that intellect that bred them." It is possible in this day of overmuch making of books Milton would have lacked the inspiration which led him to write: "Many a man lives a burden to the earth, but a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life". But it is just as true of a good book to-day as when he wrote it and good books go on living to the good of nations and peoples, for the revolutions of ages as he divined do not recover the loss of a rejected truth. My veneration for books is as great as was his, although I live in a different age. Still with him I can "divine a homicide, yes a martyrdom in the spilling or destruction of the seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in books; while if it extend to a whole impression, whereof the

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execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at the ethereal essence, the break of reason itself—slays an immortality rather than a life.”

On the heights! the beauty of those precious moments for here it is we only come to know ourselves and not to have this knowledge “means to be unconscious of all the divine that throbs in man.” By the revelation of the divine that is in us we may discover the divine in others, but this revelation does not come unless we give the godlike in us—the soul, a chance to free itself from earth-bound chains. In the long, peaceful quiet hours with books, in which I have great happiness, there comes infinite return for the more gregarious life I am denied for at even the slightest signal, no matter how inperceptible, every one of the gods will respond for needs must the one god beckon to another. In this sordid work-a-day life of mine surfeited with pain and fatigue, my soul would have lost its courage, had it not been for the humanitarian side of my work. This same soul of ours we are apt to relegate for its whole life long to utter darkness and desolation. Some day there comes an awakening and with Maeterlinck whose “Inner Beauty” is to me inspiring and uplifting, “I doubt whether anything in the world can beautify a soul more spontaneously, more naturally, than the knowledge that somewhere in its neighborhood there exists a pure and noble

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being whom it can unreservedly love." This applies with equal force to our love of and for humanity.

I often feel that I want every neurasthene to read these thoughts of his, for it seems to me if they would, less energy would be expended in a vicious circle within—"A thought that is almost beautiful—a thought that you speak not, but that you cherish with you at this moment—will irradiate you as though you were a transparent vase." That is what my patient saw in my face. I knew I was not earth bound that morning. To look upon life this way from within, to possess the inner beauty that shines out radiantly and triumphantly, simple living is necessary, and in no way more than in inviting the clean cut chemical actions necessary to health—which is after all radiance.

In this ability for concentration and intensity of effort I have great joy. All the same I am keenly grateful for the ability to perceive sounds of musical, harmonious and inspiring nature left handed only and just now for the song of that same sparrow. A little later and I shall find my way to some suburban place for a week end where the robin with hosts of other feathered songsters shall minister to my needs in royal fashion and they shall never divine that my appreciation is after all but left-handed.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE GARDEN OF AN INN AT FONTAINEBLEU

I AM distinctly elemental and I have revelled all my life in the warring of the elements. In the gathering of the clouds, the blowing of the winds from the lightest zephyr to the roar of mighty blasts, the roll of the thunder and the flashing of the lightning, I had always found the pleasure which the elemental man or woman feels as none other, but never had they given me pain. I knew no fear in the severest electrical storms, nor have I come to know fear. I shall never forget, however, the crushing power of the first severe electrical storm I experienced following upon exhaustion of my supreme nerve centers. I was not by any means a drivelling idiot, nor had I a distorted sense of my relation to the phenomena of life, but I was incapable of any sustained mental effort while necessary thought for my personal needs let alone that of the routine of work was practically beyond me. My physician had consented that I should go to Europe for the summer. This had been my plan before I completely broke down, and when I told him he gave his permission believing that the sea voyage would do me good.

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I was sitting in the beautiful and secluded garden of a quaint inn near the Forest of Fontainebleau, furnished in keeping with the time of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. The hour was nearing that of twilight, the storm had not broken, and did not for many hours. Suddenly I became conscious of a feeling of overwhelming weight. I was not consciously afraid, but I seemed to be crushed to the earth and wanted someone near me. This was contrary to my usual desire and habit, for I have always been a lonely soul in the sense that human companionship meant practically nothing unless it was that of a definite personality, with mental traits and personal characteristics which made them a pleasure and comfort to me. These I have met but rarely, not that there are not many such people in the world, but the secluded almost isolated life I have had to live for many years, in order to keep at my work and make my bread and butter, incidentally achieving my professional reputation, has effectually prevented my being thrown in contact with them.

This feeling of a crushing weight bowing me to the earth, as it were, and associated with a feeling of dread, lasted until the breaking of the storm.

Ever since that time, now thirteen years ago, I have always known twenty-four to seventy-two or more hours beforehand of the coming of such a storm. Sometimes it has been through pain in some one of



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the larger nerve trunks, sciatic for example, or the branches of the facial nerve, but more often there is no pain but a feeling of intense restlessness, superposed upon a sensation of some impending disaster.

Suddenly there comes a sense of peace and quiet again either during waking hours or upon awakening. When this feeling is experienced, I always know that I will find the direction of the wind changed, the elements descending or the sky cleared. I am much more conscious of these elemental disturbances when in the country, in the mountains, by the ocean, than in the city, although I feel them keenly there as well. As for an east wind Mr. Jarndyce of Jarndyce, the creation of that clever and accurate observer, Charles Dickens, with all his sensitiveness to an east wind, could not appreciate its presence or its coming better or as well as I do. The influence of barometric changes and of electrical storms precedes their coming by varying hours. In both instances it is a matter of my physical condition and resistance. If I am overworn, my nutrition impaired, and subjected to severe stress and strain, it is easier for the disturbed atmospheric conditions to be transmitted, and they are felt therefore a longer time preceding the breaking of the storm or definite change. In my palmiest days I am not influenced so long beforehand. That the human brain though not proven acts as a coherer, I can readily believe. Certain I am that

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under the influence of oncoming electrical storms mine does not function, i. e. discoheres. Under these conditions the only thing I can do when I have gone the wearied round of daily duty, is to lie down and go to sleep. It is imperative that I do this. I cannot keep my eyes open, nor think easily and consecutively. This is always the worst misfortune that can befall me, for my life is spent in my books and with my pen when the daily round of professional duty is done. The desire for sleep limits itself and I waken to greater comfort, but as a rule feel very unequal until a night's repose has intervened.

My physician had warned me, that if I did not stop work, he could not answer for the integrity of my intellectual centers, and as soon as I could secure suitable accommodation within ten days from this opinion, I sailed for Hamburg. Before the steamer was out of New York harbor, however, the inevitable had occurred. It seems to me that every neuron was for the time *hors du combat*. As for courage, will power, motor ability, all that makes us capable sentient beings, I was temporarily at least without them. I literally grovelled in my mind. I could not eat, never could very much for that matter, could barely dress and undress myself, and had no right to do that even. My head hurt, and my mental anguish was great. No one about me understood what I was suffering, in fact the suffering of the true neurasthene

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is but little appreciated at any time, not always by the attending physician even. The exhaustion implicated my left cerebral center, as is usually the case. My right leg and arm had no reserve of strength, and a few moments' effort was enough to bring about a condition of motor inability. The sensation in my right leg from above the knee was as though my stockings were constantly slipping down and a few moments' effort aggravated the condition to such an extent that I was confident I should never walk again.

I arrived in Hamburg no better than when I sailed save in so far as the pure air had been beneficial. After several days' rest ashore I went on to Cologne and there in the seclusion of my room overlooking the court of the hotel which was abloom with flowers, I stored up a little energy and rested my jaded nerves. Fortunately the hotel cuisine provided food I could eat, and I gained a little strength. One beautiful day early in July I felt so much better that I took the morning steamer up the Rhine. On board I fell in with a charming American man and his wife. They were the first since leaving my physician to understand how really ill I was, I did not tell them, they saw it, and were most kindly. They urged me not to attempt to get on to Paris, which was my objective point. But despite my experience of two years previously, I could not believe that sitting in the train to make this journey would be productive of

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mischief. At any rate I took it, and after forty-eight hours in Paris fled incontinently to the seclusion of the inn referred to at the edge of the beautiful Fontainebleau Forest. In all my travels at home or abroad I have never been a Cook's tourist, but I shall always be grateful to their Paris office. I did not know the environs of Paris, I was too ill to look into the matter or to call upon my medical confrères to ask for assistance. It was almost impossible to command the necessary will power to order a carriage, but I did by dint of supreme effort, and managed to get to Cook's office. In a few words I told them of my need and asked them to recommend me to the nearest suburban place to which I could go with the least expenditure of energy providing the greatest comforts.

They at once recommended me to the Hotel de la Ville at de Londres at Fontainebleau. With them it was a commercial matter entirely. To me it seemed if not a matter of life and death, one of sanity and insanity. From the time that my physician had told me that he could not be responsible for the integrity of my intellectual centers, if I did not give up my work and rest, I had never been able to rid myself of the feeling that he meant I would really become insane. I assumed that a dementia was the form my lack of intellectual integrity was to take. To say that I suffered is absolutely inadequate. Mental anguish

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is harder to endure than physical pain. I know, for I have suffered both. I had had a very considerable experience in the care of nerve and mental cases and this I constantly reviewed in my mind. Nothing is more prejudicial to the recovery of neuronie energy than this ceaseless round of painful thought. The exhaustion of storage batteries or one's neurons is repeated again and again. Self-repression is most harmful and psychical elimination a necessity. Exhausting as it has been and prejudicial to *being*, I have thanked the fates every day for my professional work, and while I have returned from my clinical work worn to the uttermost and gone to it not only with an aching body but often with an aching heart, I have found in my work for others without any pecuniary relation, a comfort and satisfaction beyond words. Could I have found some less exhausting way of securing the necessary expression of myself, it would have been better for me, but I was in and of the profession and had no choice, had I wished which I did not, but to keep myself abreast with its progress and demands.

There was never a time when dressed and on my way from my room to the invalid chair in a little court, so to speak, of the hedged in and tree-shaded garden of the Inn, that I did not glance in a pier or glass on the stair landing at my pale, worn and hag-



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gard face, to see if the right side of my face was not drawn out of shape.

The sense of muscular weakness was so great that it seemed impossible for the integrity of nerve and muscle to be maintained. Sometimes I was not satisfied until I tried to whistle, not that I had ever been much of a whistler, and had been discouraged in my childhood in my efforts because I was a "girl," but I understood the art. However, I was not always reassured, nor comfortable, despite the ability to pucker up my lips in suitable fashion and give expression to a diminutive whistle, lacking in force and carrying power, but correct in technique.

During my stay in this charming Inn I only ate indoors twice, and then because rain was falling. All my meals were served in a little box-hedged court set apart for me from among the many with their winding and intersecting alleys or paths. These were flower-bordered while trees were everywhere affording grateful shade and seclusion.

The inn, as is the custom of houses in France, opened its kitchen and administrative doors to the narrow cobble-paved street with high walls on either side effectually shielding the house, court, garden and guests from the observation of those passing along the street. It is a custom which I can but feel might be honored more in observance in this country. Here we are always in evidence, always posing, there is no

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shutting one's garden gate and inviting one's soul. We seem never to forget that we are treading the boards.

The inn surrounded this quaint garden on one side entirely and partly on another, while the remainder was entirely shut off from the street and neighboring property by high enclosing garden walls. In one of these was the gate which was always closed save upon the arrival and departure of guests. Here I spent all my daylight hours save for the early afternoon hours, at which time the sun was very hot when in accord with the custom I retired to my room for a siesta. I did nothing, occasionally read a little very little however for my tired brain was not receptive, but watched as I reclined in my canopy-covered chair, the life of the inn drifting about me. The guests and the servants flitted to and fro for the breakfast and the dejeuner hour, ever and anon the gate bell rang and new arrivals were welcomed by Madame or her capable aide, while carriages were announced for those going to drive in the forest, or bent upon other errands. Occasionally Madame or her assistant would pause a moment as they were going to and fro after the comfort of other guests and the routine care of so large a menage, to give me a kindly encouraging word, but always in French. This restricted conversation, for while I had always known French, I had not been in the habit of talking it, and a momentary effort fatigued me beyond the ability to rest. Some day I

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would like to go back there and renew my impressions of the place. No! It would not seem the same, places nor people rarely are. Time and experience change one's points of view and human experience is characterized by mutability. To-day I have a friend who is renewing his impressions of the past in Egypt and then Italy, who has gone back to his remoter past, to drown the memories of a recent past, but I am afraid he will not be wholly successful, for after all wherever we go and whenever we take ourselves with us and if we lack in happiness and content, the experiences thus obtained are proven to be most disappointing. But while this is true change of scene and environment is helpful under most circumstances, now and then.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*"In States of extreme Brain Fag the Horizon is narrowed almost to the Passing Thought."*

MIND.

*"And of their wonted Vigor left them Drain'd, Exhausted, Spiritless, Afflicted, Fallen."*

MILTON, PARADISE LOST.

*"Great Exhaustion can not be cured with sudden Remedies no more in a Kingdom than in a natural Body."*

SIR H. WOTTON, RELIQUAE.

**M**Y trip abroad was ill-fated. The sea voyage did me no good, neither did my sojourn on the other side. I gathered myself together a bit during my stay in the charming inn near the forest of Fontainebleau. As soon as I felt that I had the veriest atom of energy my brain began to teem with the many things I wanted to do all in the direction of professional betterment. I felt that I could not return without at least making a bluff at them.

My expenses by reason of my physical handicap had greatly exceeded former visits and to come back without the accomplishment of my purpose was not to be considered for one moment. All my life I had

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summoned my courage and will power to my aid, and despite desperate odds had always taken the gambler's chance, arriving somehow. I saw no reason despite all my past experience why I should not do it again. I did not realize what I was doing. One does not when it is the precious energy of their neurons that they are lavishly using up. Neither patient nor friend has crossed my path since then nor ever will, without being warned and carefully watched and guarded to the conservation of neuronie energy.

After two weeks at Fontainebleau I made my preparations to go to Paris preparatory to crossing the Channel to England. I was very lonely and homesick, there were neither English nor American people staying at the inn, although two American young women came one day for dejeuner and afterwards to drive in the forest. This I had been unable to do. The mistress of the inn referred them to me as I reclined in my invalid chair for an answer to some question concerning the Forest of Fontainebleau. I gave them such information as I could, and when all was said and done they asked me if I could bear the fatigue of the drive. I replied that I would gladly risk it for I should regret going away without visiting the forest, that it was such a comfort to hear my own tongue, for while I spoke and understood French, I was like the Scotchman who, when asked if he joked, said "Yes, but I jock with great deffeculty". The



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constant thinking necessary to the adjustment of my phrases in French tried me beyond measure.

The drive was charming, but I became very tired and felt I could never have gone alone. I have often thought of those young women, have wished that I might meet them and express to them once more my sincere appreciation of their thoughtful courtesy. It was the cup of cold water to the wayside wayfarer, the value of which is but little realized in these days of hurry and selfish pursuit of personal happiness.

Before I left my retreat I managed to creep about the beautiful grounds of the interesting château or palace of Fontainebleau. Everything about the château appealed to me, as historic sites, buildings and people always do, and I was unwilling to go away without glimpsing its magnificent interior. I got no further than the *Gallerie de Henri II* or *Salle des Fêtes*. I undertook the visit without a thought of disaster the only thing concerning me was the good-for-nothingness of my right leg. I felt afraid it might weary in well doing before I had saturated my mind with a knowledge of the many points of interest and beauty. But I was utterly unprepared for the sensations I experienced immediately I was within its four enclosing walls. It was one of nameless horror, a feeling as though they were crowding in upon me with crushing force not only upon every side, but from above as well. I never was, nor am I in the habit of

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giving up when I undertake to do a thing. I felt as though I could not remain long enough to attain my purpose, but I tried the old trick of setting my teeth together and saying "I will". It was no use. The sense of dread, horror and impending danger of what I knew not, as well as the increasing helplessness of my right leg was so great that I turned to the door and fled incontinently to the grounds of the château. Never shall I forget how wearily I crept down the massive and beautiful Escalier du Fer à-Cheval and how heartbroken I felt. It seemed to me that there was nothing to be gained by trying any longer to keep up the weary struggle for existence. No! I had no suicidal impulse. I was too down and out for that, so far as nerve energy was concerned. I simply felt hopeless. There was not a ray of light in my horizon—neither towards the dawn, nor the sunset time. No matter how tired I had been in the years of work and effort back of me I was rarely without a desire for achievement and a belief that I would yet more nearly reach my goal. On the other hand I was always able to look towards a quiet sunset time spent as long as strength and ability was mine, which I intended should be as long as I lived in a little professional work, enough to keep me alert and active and to enable me to give to others out of the fullness of life's rich and varied experience and for the rest with my books and pen.

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Two years previously, when I first "sprained my brain," there had come into my life as a patient—a woman of seventy with a charm of personality beyond words, a depth of humanity and loving kindness that was Christ-like, an experience of life varied and rich and a youth that was divine. She was the only guest I entertained under my roof over night, for while I had a care for and of her, she understood my need and so met it out of her largesse, that she did not add to my fatigue as most people did. I never felt so rich as when she was with me. After a strenuous day to go down to my library with its soft light all the dear familiar things about me, my white hammock given me by two South-American patients, husband and wife, made by South-American Indian women of the cotton they had grown, stretched invitingly before the fire and to find this lovely silvery-haired, soft-voiced, womanly woman with her dainty head drapery of Fayal lace, always with a book or her writing pad on her knee, and seated in a low, highbacked Spanish chair of two hundred years gone by, gave me a sense of comfort and richness as does not come too often in life. She had an active brain and great versatility and was the widow of a well known literati of this country in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Her intelligent memory had stored away the fruits of her life's experience. By reason of her sound sense, good judgment, dis-

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criminating taste and cheerful philosophy she was enabled to bring forth the fruits of all her experience for the good and enlightenment of all with whom she came in contact. To me she was a comfort beyond words, and not the least of her helpful influence was due to the universality of her motherhood. My mother, blessings on her memory, had not meant to me that which my father did, and the charm of this dear woman's motherliness was therefore all the greater to me. She came into my life at the age of seventy and remained cloistered there, so far as I was concerned, until her death at eighty. A few months before her death she sent for me to come to see her in another city, saying "They," referring to her medical attendants, "do not tell me, but I read between the lines and I know I have not much longer to stay, and I would like to look into your dear face again before I go. There is also a little professional service you can render me. May I expect you for the week end?" Dear lady. The service, yes, I rendered it, but had I not divined the beautiful thought and kindness back of the enclosed check, I would have preferred to render it without even the remuneration of traveling expenses. Her loveliness of character, her perfect exemplification of the truth that whom the gods love die young, for that means not young in years of necessity, but young in all the divine attributes of mind and heart whenever they die ap-

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pealed to the best that was in me and I promised myself that despite pain of such constancy and severity that many an unwilling moan was wrung from my lips, despite sleepless nights spent in tossing from side to side, trying to find a position in which I could be comfortable, despite a weariness of body and mind that was well nigh unbearable, and an anguish of despair over the incompleteness of result from my honest effort, from that time on I would as far as lay within my qualities of heart and mind make myself mean to others as much as she meant to me. Many a night when worn and hurt almost to the limit, when I could not sleep and when every nerve and nerve ending cried out with an intolerable agony of pain and I felt so alone in the misery of it all that my eyes would fill with tears, my thought traveled to her dear wrinkled face, so calm and happy and to her cheerful helpful influence. Seldom did the thought of her fail to strengthen resolution, and although the conditions of my life were such that I could not always rise above them, and weakness and despair were often the controlling influences, still to her I feel I owe so much that I cannot forbear this tribute to her memory. No woman has ever filled her place in my life and never will. There are those who say I mean to them in these ways. In so far as this is true, their debt is to these memories of my dear gracious lady rather than to myself.



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At this juncture, however, there was neither retrospect nor prospect. It seemed the end of things and days were required to store up enough energy to give me sufficient hope and courage to take my weary way back to Paris. I had but a few weeks that I could absent myself on the other side from my responsibilities which were accentuated by reason of trouble, financial loss and illness.

The journey to Paris required a herculean effort but it was made. Again there followed exhaustion of my forces. By dint of resting the most of the day as well as the night I managed to do a few of the things which took me to Paris. I then went on to London but upon my arrival I had to go to bed again. It was dreary and heartbreaking in the extreme. I was all alone and dependent upon myself for everything. I suffer it all again when I know of others who are passing through a similar experience. I tried a West End boarding house, but it was so *triste* I could not stay. Upon advising with a physician who had entered my life through the medium of correspondence only and whom I met personally for the first time I secured a room in a large and beautiful hotel on the Thames Embankment and in the heart of the city, where I could have the quiet and solitude of my bedroom or the grateful diversion of life as it streamed about me. The sun room, though but little radiant for it was London, overlooking the Thames

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and the many bits of historic interest was a great comfort to me, when I could expend the necessary energy to go there. But much of the day had to be spent in bed utterly helpless and entirely alone. After several days of rest I managed to store up enough energy to take a hansom and call upon two or three medical men in whose work I was much interested. Following this I was again *hors du combat* and at last I came to a realizing sense of my condition. My disposition is to be so intent upon whatever concerns me, that my awakenings are apt to be very rude. It was well into August and the date of my sailing was for the twenty-second of the month that I might reach home in time to take up my work the first of September. My fund of common sense and life long experience as well as the impelling necessity made it clear to me that I must get back and try to get well through complete rest in order that I might take up my work again and meet the financial obligations which were increasing daily by reason of my helplessness. I went to the tourist office, booking my passage to be transferred to a steamer sailing at an earlier date. I tried to explain my need so as to secure a concession from the officials of steamers already overcrowded for the return voyage, but what could they do. Now I know that but then my need was so great that I felt that I should be their first consideration. My lack of self-control—it seems to me that, that

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winter, spring and summer there never was a time that my eyes were not full of unshed tears, was so evident that the least word, look, an unspoken thought, would cause them to flow, thereby prejudicing my cause. I knew it but I could not help it. I was helpless and powerless. My right leg, arm, and right facial muscles were weak and served me badly. My head was so tired, there never was a sense of rest. I was profoundly depressed and I ached so wearily from head to foot, and at the same time every part of my body was so exquisitely sensitive to touch that I well nigh despaired. A letter at this juncture from the trained nurse friend of whom I have already spoken helped me once more to decision. I secured my passage in a steamer sailing one week earlier than my original date, sacrificing one half of my passage money to this end, wrote her to take no case, to instruct the caretaker to open my house, to have everything ready for my reception, and to stay with me until I was well. She had spent an hour with me the evening before I sailed and helped me in my preparations for the voyage. She said but little, but while caring for me afterwards said "I never saw any one for whom my heart ached as it did for you and I wondered what that "big doctor" of yours meant by permitting you to go on that voyage and alone. You should have been put to bed."

Dear me, don't I know that now, and did not I

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know it before I sailed for home. But the patient is not the one to know it. Whoever is in authority, whether a father as in the case of the man referred to in a subsequent page, a family friend or the physician, must assume the responsibility. For a little time, while still on the other side and on the voyage home I was disposed to blame my physician and to feel unkindly towards him. That soon passed and now in the calm retrospect after all these years, I realize that by reason of my strong will, tremendous courage, I dominated the decision as I know I often do, therefore I can but hold him blameless.

The voyage was not well borne. I could not eat but again the outdoor life was good for me. I was fortunate in meeting some old acquaintances. Still it was believed I could do more than I did. The hurt of that as I felt it then and as I have felt it during all these years rankles still. So profound was the exhaustion of my left motor centres that the loss of strength and the feeling of being paralyzed, extended throughout the entire right side of my body, invading the left after a day of tempestuous seas. No one knew I was coming and even so there was no one belonging to me whom I could have asked save my nurse friend, and I could only hope she was at the house as I had directed. Putting aside all pride, I told the custom officer of my weakness and begged him to inspect my little luggage quickly. He did it as promptly as

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possible, but if red tape could take cognizance of one's need at such time it would be a saving clause. Never shall I forget that weary ride uptown. The streets were so rough and the reverberations through their canon like depths in addition to the jolting exhausted my little remaining force. It was such a comfort to reach my own threshold again, but it was a very sad home coming. I had left crushed and broken, but I hoped much. All had come to naught. The house-keeper let me in and said the nurse was on my bedroom floor. Before attempting the weary climb up the stairs I went into my office to get my mail. Before the accumulated mail of eight weeks, medical and scientific journals, reprints, letters from far and near, all pregnant with the memory of past effort and future requirement, I fled dismayed, taking only one letter from a very dear friend which had just been received and was therefore on top. It seemed good to have it to welcome me home written as it was by a very busy and earnest man. By dint of holding on to the bannisters, I managed to climb up the stairs to my rooms. It was weary work, however, and left me so wretchedly tired that my friend's cheery voice of welcome was more than grateful. As soon as the greetings were over, I said you are going to stay, are you not, or have you a case? No, she had no case, "but you will not need me but a day or two, doctor, and I will stay that



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long." In my inmost soul I knew better, but I was tired of combating the opinions of others as to how I was when I would be better, and what was good for me as I still am. Just two friends have I that understand and they have trod and still tread the weary way. I crept about the room putting, with the nurse's assistance, my things away. Before an hour was done I said there was no use, I cannot keep up any longer. She made my bed comfortable, helped me into a negligee, in this instance a silk night dress, which a patient who could not pay money had made for me, that my sensitive body need not suffer any more hurt, for in all my busy, hardworked life I had never owned a negligee, just business clothes, and an occasional "dress up gown". Words cannot convey to others, unless they have had a similar experience, my appreciation of the luxury, the comfort, the peace of my environment again. This was increased by the presence of a faithful, congenial nurse who for years had stood by the bedside of my patients and who had never failed me. She still lives to be called blessed by those for whom she cares. I shall never forget how despite aches, pains, and helplessness, I revelled in all this and also in having my food brought to me at the proper time without any thought or care on my part. It was the beginning of weeks of the closest companionship and beautiful care. To-day, nearly thirteen years later, she is as she has been since first I

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knew her nearly a quarter of a century ago as dear a friend as I have. No other nurse in all my experience with nurses has ever replaced her in my affection and esteem. I told her how I felt I should not have been allowed to go away and said it made me feel as though my physician had not understood my needs and discussed with her the advisability of sending for another neurologist. But when all was said and done, I said No! I will not call in any one else, he knows my condition and he helped me to pull through happily before and had I been the physician and another the patient I should be better able to care for the case a second time than another.

A message was therefore sent. This was Saturday, but he was at his country place for the week end. Therefore he did not see me until the following Monday. When he came, I was at once reassured and my confidence restored. This was but just, for his professional attainments were such as to command my respect and his personal characteristics my esteem and confidence. The comfort of feeling his strength back of me was tremendous, and it has never left me in all these years. On the other hand I realize fully how much his cheerful optimism and fund of humor has served my needs.

He looked me all over, asked a few questions, not many, but I told him in broken sentences and feeble voice of my dreary experience, of my good-for-noth-

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ing leg and arm, my weakened facial muscles, how I had tried to comfort myself by standing before the glass to see if I could put the muscles of my mouth in shape to whistle, of how during the voyage my whole side had been weak and helpless, and of the last distressing indication of exhausted nerve force, the losing of one and sometimes two toes.

They would disappear absolutely, so far as sensation of having them was concerned, for hours. I was not worried about them, I was too exhausted to be worried about anything, still it was a comfort to have the nurse come with a fresh hot water bottle, when I called to her that I had lost my toes again.

I think it was not until after his second or third visit that I summoned up sufficient courage to tell him of the horrible haunting fear I had carried away with me, that had never left me during all the time I was gone, that had been with me ever since the day he told me that, if I did not stop my work at once and get away, he could not be responsible for what would befall me, that my intellectual centers would suffer and that that fear still remained. I finally managed to confide to him all this horrible dread. I never had the slightest mental aberration and I went over and over all my experience with mental cases to try to know just exactly what the point of attack would be. The only thing I could see about myself was my utter inability to do anything, to see any joy

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in living, but I did not want to die. It was not a feeling of depression as I had known it both before and since, but of utter lack of interest in everybody and everything. Had I possessed the inherent potential a profound melancholia might have been my fate, but I did not. I dragged myself about perfunctorily before I sailed, attending to my routine duties, professional and otherwise, and though utterly weary and ennuied when the end of the day came, would still perfunctorily drag my weary footsteps to some nearby hotel for my dinner, hoping to strike a cuisine that would give my flagging appetite a little stimulus. It never came, but I kept on trying as the doctor had impressed upon me the necessity of being fed. There is one hotel which I particularly affected at the time, because it was not far distant from my house, and because the inner court had a fountain and growing plants. These gave my exhausted and wearied senses a momentary refreshment, but by the time my dinner was eaten and I was back in an easy-chair in my library, it was all gone, and the pall of inertia, dread and despair had again settled down upon me. I tried to read as was my wont, but there was neither intellectual, emotional, nor spiritual response, just a feeling of having partaken of husks or of the apples of Sodom and Gomorrah. There was an actual physical sense of utter lack of osmosis, or transfer of liquids through cell mem-

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branes in my brain as it were—if one could take cognizance of so intimate a physiological process—a feeling of intense dryness and aridity.

That hotel I have religiously avoided ever since. I think nothing would induce me to sit down in that dining room or to partake of a mouthful of food there again. Oh yes! I would go were there a necessity, but not otherwise. That is one of the lessons I have learned, to avoid the doing of anything not necessary, if in the doing painful thoughts and feelings will be awakened. This is in order to conserve my energy for the sake of life's obligation. If however occasion demands I can meet any emergency at any time and place.

On the other hand my obsession if you will but really it was not, for the doctor had emphatically said "If you do not stop at once and get away, your intellectual centres will suffer", in regard to insanity was never discussed. I was too hurt and sensitive at the thought that anything of that sort could befall me, that I would not talk about it just as to-day there are many things I do not speak of even with him, simply because of the neuronc anguish awakened. We skim across thin ice occasionally, but there is always a joke attached so as to appeal to my sense of humor. It has been the saving clause in my life and a rule of the office is to try to keep it in such evidence as to rise above the pathology seeking attention. The only



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thing ever said was in the first instance a positive reassurance that there was no such danger and then and subsequently a teasing play upon words which would arouse all the fight in me. Gradually this intolerable fear disappeared and while I have been through very much since, it has never recurred. I know within myself that I am not one of those to cross the border line unless from a traumatism. Were I inclined to arterial changes they would be postponed indefinitely by reason of my simple life, but thank heaven I am not. Again—Kismet—I question whether I will ever suffer a head injury that will prejudice my mental health save in being head weary for I have had four serious injuries to my head, no one of which prejudiced my health more than the sunstroke. A medical man, other than my physician in expressing his interest and concern, said, "But never mind, doctor, your gray matter has not been interfered with." Even without all these untoward happenings my brain could never have been more alert, active and capable of understanding, but it would have been capable of greater sustained effort than it is. I do not spend my days in repining but in thankfulness for that which the gods have provided.

Nothing was said as to my fiasco save one day I summoned my courage to my aid and I asked "Why did you let me go, doctor?" He answered "You are the only neurasthene I ever did let go on a journey, I

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always keep them at home, but to tell you the truth I did not realize how far gone you were." That is the key note. He would have realized more fully, and I would have had to suffer less, had it not been for the symptomatic neurasthene who dominates the field by reason of their greater frequency, their persistent pose and often hysterical conditions. The case of an utterly down and out, hard-worked physician, whose physician and friends have united in saying "she is all brain and no body" was very different. As to the truth of the above opinion I can say nothing save that my mind has been to me the delight of my life. The conditions and pleasures which have prejudiced its best activities, even the most simple friendly and social diversions, of which the world never knows, created in me only a sense of disgust and dissatisfaction.

## CHAPTER NINE

*"A Mother is a Mother still,  
The Holiest Thing alive."*

COLERIDGE, THE THREE GRAVES.

*"Mothers should never die."*

THE first thing I did upon my arrival from my voyage on that morning late in August just two years from the culmination of my previous but incomplete break, just a "sprain", and five days less than two years from my first visit to my physician, I sent a telegram to my mother announcing my safe return to this side of the water but saying nothing of my health. She always felt happier to know her brood even when they were grown and responsible women were under the same roof with herself, and in this instance on the same side of the Atlantic. I was the only one who had given her this pain, this was my third visit and I was very glad to send her word of my arrival. About the middle of that first week at home with my physician and nurse in attendance, my business man came to see me and I went over all my business affairs with him. I had overdrawn my ac-

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count and ill as I was I had to decide upon ways and means. Bills for professional work were long overdue but when are they not. At last everything was said and I decided upon my course of action and instructed him what to do. I had a few dollars cash, my nurse had a few, and our friendship was such that mine was her's and her's mine if need existed. There was no question. It was simply done, without any pose or affectation, just as she met all my needs even to serving me the most delicious sweetbreads prepared in many different ways to my gustatory delight as appetite returned and all made from calves brains bought for a few pennies instead of the more expensive luxury.

From this interview I was left in a much worse condition than when I arrived home. The congestion in the right side of my brain was aggravated and involved the entire hemisphere. I was in great mental and physical pain. Ice caps were kept on my head and my nurse in her anxiety called in another physician who happened to call at the house on business as my own doctor was still at his country place save for his stated hour and day. This man increased her sense of anxiety. To me he meant nothing, just something extremely distasteful to be gotten rid of as many people, servants, stenographers and typewriters for example whom I have had to employ. Just as fast as possible I get rid of them or, if it is necessary to use

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their services I use them, burying them meanwhile ten thousand fathoms and more deep in the pool of oblivion. If I am to live my allotted days, fulfill my mission in life, such people must be as though dead to me. Their vibrations disturb all the beautiful harmonies of life. The doctor in question prescribed some camphor pills—exactly why camphor I do not know. For that matter doctors write innumerable prescriptions for innumerable conditions that have absolutely no meaning nor bearing upon the case in question and then prate learnedly of the inexactness of medical science. In their hands inexact—yes—because they have not learned the first fundamental underlying therapeutic principle. With a well known physician an earnest man and extensive contributor to medical literature I believe it to be “a sin to have therapeutists tell us that therapeutics is ‘a confusion’ today and to have things as they are, when we know what therapeutics means gauged from the standpoint of human suffering.”

The next day my own physician came. When the nurse told him of my condition of the day before, of the heart disturbance, the pain in my head, my temperature, he asked when she had finished what the doctor gave me. I told him, camphor. Instantly came the quizzical smile and joke which I so much appreciated and had learned to watch its coming, “what for, to keep off the moths?” I was pretty ill for some



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days as well as exhausted. Saturday at midnight one week from my arrival I heard the door bell. The nurse was in an adjoining room. I called to her asking if she would mind answering it. She at once went down and although she returned promptly, it seemed to me that it took a long time to receive the message and come up two flights of stairs. When she came up she had a telegram in her hand which she opened and went to the dressing table light to read. Standing motionless she put it back in the envelope but said nothing. I waited a moment or two and then said, "You may as well tell me, I know what it is." She then read a message from one of my sisters, saying "mother ill, please come." I knew before she told me. My mother had not been entirely well. There was nothing to do but to dictate a message of "love and sympathy, too ill to travel." It was the first they knew of my illness. I told the nurse where she would find the nearest telegraph office and between midnight and the first morning hour she slipped out quietly to send it. It seemed very strange that I who had always been so active and energetic had been the one upon whom demands were made in sickness, suffering and trouble, should be lying all alone in that big house helpless for all practical purposes. There was no fretting nor moaning, no expression of grief nor interest. I was too utterly down and out for that. The remainder of the night passed somehow and the

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morning dawned. I was as usual awake with the dawn. The nurse came in as the door bell rang again. Once more she went to answer it and once more I waited what seemed an interminable time. It was as I knew another telegram. She opened it, standing by my bed side and read, "mother died at midnight." With the reading of this message my body slipped away from me entirely. It was as though I had no body nothing but a head. All consciousness of my physical self disappeared absolutely. The batteries were exhausted and for a time there was no communication. As the effect of the shock passed I gradually stored up sufficient neuronie energy to establish communication again with the rest of my body, but continued for many days to lose my toes. I did not fret do not recall having wept—just lay there quietly thinking vaguely how the old home was broken and wondering how they were all bearing it. I also vaguely wondered if they would take her back to my childhood's home to lay her by my father, sister and brother. In my mind I relived my father's illness, death and funeral services. Even now it seems it must have happened only yesterday. There had been days of pain and suffering, physician friends had come and gone all of them in the village, for my father was respected and beloved, every measure had been exhausted, but he lay dying. I was called in to bid him goodbye. He was gasping for breath—a pneumonia

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—and moving his hands restlessly back and forth as though fanning the air. There was no merciful oxygen stored then to be used. Our home was built as a typical New England house with its brick oven in the kitchen, as well as the kitchen range, and a great set copper boiler, while contiguous wood house and work-room were equipped with my father's work bench where he loved to recreate and where I laboriously wrought out of bits of pine board with plane, saw and hammer furniture for the houses of mine and my sisters dolls. The house was filled with physicians, family friends and neighbors. Some one of the family friends, my grandmother I think had prepared the weekly baking of home made bread. It was much needed with all the guests there were in the house, and there was no village baker. It had been placed in the *brick oven*, but in the absence of my mother there was no one who understood how to care for or remove it. Some one said to call me that I knew. I was not quite fourteen. Intent upon its care I went to work, but before I had finished a hand was laid upon my arm and I was taken away to join my mother and sisters because my father's life was ended. Why is it that one must for the time end all one's duties and suspend one's relations to life and its interests, when the life of a dear one goes out. It is so unwise to cut one off from all the daily homely duties which after all often serve to prevent despair. The feeling of a

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friend of mine upon the death of his wife to whom he was devotedly attached, that he was the one to take her in his arms and place her at rest in her grave, is much more nearly right, it seems to me. But I went to complete the group, the widowed wife and mother with six daughters, the youngest almost a baby. On the following Sunday my father was buried. With the tolling of the church bell, our pet dog began his utterly mournful heartbroken cry. Know—of course he knew that his beloved master was gone. To this day I see the long procession wending its way through the village streets to the cemetery where my little brother lay. Not carriages—yes, some—but what meant more, every description of pioneer and farm wagon, even to the ox cart. The owners of all were there to show respect to his memory and to tell of the great love they bore him. If the honors paid after death are worth while, then give me the tribute of affection, esteem, confidence and respect which the village and countryside pays the finest expression of a medical man's life, the country practitioner. I would be glad to know, did it make any difference that my body was to be followed to its last resting place by a gathering of such sincere and rugged souls and not perfunctorily cared for by paid hirelings. And so he was laid to rest in the forest embowered cemetery, near the homes of the people he had cared for, to one

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of whom his last professional service was rendered that cost him his life.

I lay in my bed quietly recalling all this and picturing how the many friends of my mother from the home she sought after my father's death in order that her daughters might have better educational advantages than were possible in the village near where we were born, would accompany her and my sisters, how they would be joined by family friends still living near the old home and by many who had known my father. It was a beautiful day and afterwards I knew, but not for a long time as my physician did not let the nurse read me the home letters that at sunset time they left her with rose-crowned coffin, seventy-six American beauty roses, the number of her years and the offering of her youngest sister to rest by him who had won her heart so many years before and with whom she had borne all the privations and toil of the pioneer physician's life. To all who knew her she was blessed and no matter who came into her life, they soon fell as those before them into the habit of speaking of her always as mother ———.

There was but little said by my physician or myself—just a little warmer hand clasp and the quiet remark, with a suggestion of his usual smile, "Mothers should never die." Later on when stronger, the nurse who had known my mother and family well, told me of the letters from home, of the messages sent me,



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but it was many weeks before the letter telling me of her short illness, her peaceful dropping to sleep and of the last sad rites, fragrant with the loving kindly acts of her lifelong friends, among them the father of the little baby whose cradle I used to watch and wonder if I could revenge myself on him because of his mother's treatment of me as child at school, as well as those of later years. Of these one said to my sister: "Your mother must have thought beautiful thoughts to have such a sweet happy look remain on her face." The wealth of white pinks and tea roses, the parting thought of my sisters for one who dearly loved flowers and every thing beautiful were dropped gently into the evergreen lined grave by my little nephews, her grandsons, one of whom crept close to his mother's side, whispering softly: Oh, see mama, the grave is all mossy." How much more appropriate, more beautiful, to await the transformation of energy, through which our bodies must pass in so simple and natural an environment, than in casket after casket of the least perishable materials placed within the hermetically sealed tomb or vault, the expense of which is enormous and is often met, by permitting the physician who has sacrificed time and health in his care during life to wait weary months for his much needed honorarium.

## CHAPTER TEN

*"It does not matter so long as you do not hate the other."*

THE late fall, winter and spring following my complete fiasco, was a very busy one in its professional relation both in my office, at my clinic and in my lecture room. They were filled to the brim. The doctor wisely permitted me to go to my office for two hours each morning as soon as I had stored up a sufficient reserve of nerve force in order that I might sit and direct the care of my patients. I was not permitted to do any actual work after my consultation with the patient had led to the formation of an opinion other than in the direction of his or her care. I had a good assistant in the person of a very capable man, the son and brother of dear friends. He served my needs off and on not only in such ways, but in many an act of brotherly kindness from the year preceding my crash until his death from acute Bright's disease seven years later. I was not allowed to see him during his illness, although in his delirium he constantly called me by name asking where I was. The attending physicians one of whom had been my

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student and the other for whose mother I had cared professionally as well as my own physician, refused their consent to my visiting him, because they all felt that the effect upon me would be disastrous. The last time I saw him in my office just a short time before his illness, he told me of his suffering, saying: "I cannot stand it any longer, doctor; another night like last and I shall get out of it." The dearest son, brother and friend in his late thirties, had shipwrecked his life when still quite young and long before he studied medicine by marrying the wrong woman. This happens too often. Marriage after all is just like life—a gamble—and one takes the gambler's chance. Those who win recognize the truth of this just as well as those who fail.

When they told me he had finished life's battle, I sent beautiful fragrant flowers and went despite my utter lack of reserve strength to comfort the mother and sisters my patients as well as friends, but I was not permitted to go to his home, nor to attend the last sad rites. For that matter I had to hold myself aloof from death all these years. No! I am not afraid to die nor of it, but always there has been the need must and my nerve force could not be trifled with in any way. I have missed and still miss him sadly, for I had looked forward by reason of my seniority as well as his good qualities to his ultimately taking and caring for the practice which I had built up.

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Lying on a couch in my office with him for my assistant to take all steps, I began my work. As energy increased I kept my entire office hour, the conventional one from nine to one often going over until two o'clock. But I lacked in content and one day when the doctor came in response to his various queries, I said "I am so ennuied, doctor, that life is insupportable." With a prevision for which I have always been grateful, he said after a little kindly talk, "very well, you may resume your clinic and teaching next week". What a joy I felt that once more I could enter the arena. Up to this time I had been obliged by his direction to go to my bedroom and lie there quietly for the earlier afternoon hours, recharging my exhausted storage cells. Towards four to five o'clock I made my toilette in a lovely soft cashmere teagown of becoming color, and went to my library. There upon my return from my first clinic day I found a hammock, the money for which my sister had sent while I was so ill to buy fruit and flowers, but which my sensible nurse refused to use in that way as fruit she said I had to provide for myself, flowers I could do without, and the hammock I needed. In collusion with my assistant it had been purchased and stretched diagonally across my library a room of noble proportions, just in front of the fire place, that I might bask in the warmth, glow and cheer of my grate fire.

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There I spent the little time that was left of the afternoons of my clinic, almost all of the four other afternoons and all my evenings absolutely idle, save as I have indicated. There the few choice spirits, the dear ones came to me for a moment or two, sometimes later on when stronger for an hour or more. They expected naught of me, I did not have to get up to talk unless I felt equal to the effort. This life might and often does make one inordinately selfish and I said one evening to a scientific friend who often came and whom I knew well: "Do you know I have grown very selfish since all this happened." "No," he replied, "you have only learned the art of self-defense." Dear me, it is an art I have had and still have to practice. But the saving clause in my case was actively in evidence always. It is impossible to minister to the needs of others as a conscientious physician must and become very selfish, especially when from eight to ten hours a week are given to the needs of those who come without money or price as in dispensary work. Sometimes I animadvert upon my profession because of their many failures in relation to their patients, but more times I bow down to the Christ-like expression of very much of their professional work and relation to human needs. That they fail sometimes should never—unless there is culpable, ignorant and criminal conduct—be charged up against them. They are not infallible—no one is,



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and "human experience, like the stern lights of a ship at sea, illumines only the path which we have passed over." Fundamental training no matter how thorough and good never takes the place of this experience.

Later on my first hammock gave place to the white one from South America. One evening, the one of the doctor's weekly visit, found me there as usual. It was my natal day. I have a foolish habit of never ignoring my milestones, although each one takes me a year further on in life's journey and a year nearer the end of all that I love so much. He came to my hammock as usual to greet me, and I saw when he passed the intervening library table that he held in his hand a magnificent bunch of American Beauty roses. Involuntarily my hands went up and I cradled them in my arms with an exclamation of delight. It seemed incredible that such a busy professional man could take the time and the thought to bring me a "posy". My hard matter of fact life and relation to human needs, which justly or unjustly to myself I recognized as greater than mine own had resulted in an almost complete deprivation of all the little attentions and devotions which women love. Perhaps this was my fault for I was intensely and most earnestly devoted to my profession. My practice grew, and borrowed moneys were gradually returned. In this I had great satisfaction and comfort.

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But as the busy months slipped by, I grew unutterably weary. Spring came, bringing with it the recognition on the part of my physician and myself that I would have to have a vacation for this one summer whatever happened in the future.

When I told him that a patient wished me to go with her and her family in order to help her back to health to a private club in the Adirondacks for July and August, he at once encouraged my going. One morning in June I was much less well and my exhausted irritable heart muscle was acting badly, he came in during my office hour to see me. I received him in my consultation room instead of the library, as patients were waiting to be seen and cared for. After looking me over, the question came up as to whether I had given my patient an answer. To this I replied that I had not, and when he rather urged it upon me, out of the depths of my pathological submergence, I replied that it seemed to me, if I did it, I should hate my sex as long as I lived. To which came the prompt retort, "It does not matter so long as you do not hate the other." However, it was ultimately decided that I should go because it meant less financial strain than would otherwise have obtained. Still there were several talks before it was fully decided, for I did not want to go, I was very weary and at that time I had not grown so accustomed to unutterable fatigue as since and in my innermost self

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I rebelled. Days of rain and dampness accentuated all my weariness and pain, as it always does, for I am essentially a child of the sun. He came in one afternoon during all this gloom and wetness. The answer had to be given to my patient. He still encouraged my going and finally in desperation at the thought of continued professional care, I said "we must be sure to do the right thing this summer, doctor, for we made a mistake last summer," to which he promptly replied: "Yes, I made two but I buried the other one". My sense of humor came to the front again, I laughed and said: "Very well, I will go."

With the first of July I went to the Adirondacks, finding the patient and her family as arranged. The journey nearly killed me, the heat on the train was well nigh insupportable; the stay at the little hotel from which I was to take the stage the next morning for the lake bordered and mountain-environed club house far from comfortable while the cuisine offered nothing to tempt my appetite. However, it was all done, and I arrived in the late afternoon after the drive through the beautiful mountain land with all its varied interest in time to see the sunset's reflected glory mirrored in the bosom of the mountain lake.

I experienced the delicious sense of community with my kind from the warmth and cordiality of the greeting of my patient and her family. After refreshing myself with necessary ablutions and toilette my even-

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ing meal which had been kept after the usual time for me on account of the lateness of my arrival was served. While eating but little I not only was but am absolutely dependent upon quality as well as regularity. I had always had it. Impaired appetite and weakened digestion made it necessary. Cold uninviting food prejudiced my digestion for days, weeks even, and still would if I permitted myself to be placed where I should have to partake of it. But the years of handicap have given me independence of thought and action, so far as these material things are concerned, as experience has taught me that I can not afford a different course. My room was a great disappointment as it was on the first floor and so placed as to receive but little sunshine. I consoled myself, however, by the thought of the long beautiful hours I should spend out of doors when my daily professional duty was done, but I did not reckon with the days and days of downpour, characteristic of mountain and lake countries in wet seasons. Scarcely a day but it rained, and it was the wettest rain I had ever known. Everything dripped with moisture, the skies, the trees, while an enveloping dampness was everywhere. We scarcely ever went on a nearby picnic excursion in the woods or for a row on the beautiful lake, but it rained, rained; while all the creeping, biting creatures that inhabit the Adirondack woods in July were most actively in evidence. Mos-



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quitos, gnats and the familiar little black fly, all were there and all conspired to make my sensitive body and nerves hurt afresh. Then there were the hosts of creeping things that came out suddenly from under the little growing things, worms and beetles galore, as well as snakes. I had known all these creatures intimately from my childhood up, had never been afraid of them, preferred snakes to worms and had never been willing to impale the latter when I had spent idle hours on the banks of an inland stream, a mountain brook, or off the rocky coast of Maine, upon my fish hook. They were so cold and soft that they gave me a sense of having touched some unclean and dead thing. This is an impression which has remained, and at one stage of my prolonged convalescence was so great that to find a worm in the nuts which I sometimes had served for my desert, threw me into a perfect terror. I recall one evening, the regular one for my physician's weekly visit, he was very late and my faithful "Ti" had served my dinner. I knew by my growing weakness and depression that I needed food. Nuts were served that evening and inside one of them which I took up to eat was coiled a big fat white worm. Involuntarily I threw it from me, sprang up from the table, shivering with terror, and caring nothing for the completion of my dinner. For a moment I walked back and forth in the library adjoining my dining room



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but shrinking from going into the latter with a horrible dread because that grewsome thing was crawling somewhere on the floor. I rang the bell, ordered the doors closed, the table cleared, told "Ti" to find and remove a nut I had dropped on the floor, sat down at my ever-ready writing table and formulated my wish that when I died my body should be cremated, signed it, and when the Doctor came as he did later, asked him to please sign the statement as a witness, which he did without question when I told him what had led me to do it. That paper remains with my business papers to this day, for I suffered much mental anguish in relation to the processes through which our bodies pass, when my dear gracious lady of whom I have written died. At the time of my mother's death my horizon was limited to the passing thought, and I did not trouble about these things.

It is true that I was very worn and exhausted at this time, but such conduct as this had never been my custom. I did not like the little reptiles, but I ignored them when well. With exhaustion of neuronie energy, will power was more or less in abeyance, and untoward impressions and happenings could not be met in a calm and rational manner. Snakes I have always known. I fancy most of us have since the Garden of Eden. I mean this literally, however, for the pioneer prairie home of my childhood was in-

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fested with snakes and chief among them I recall the inoffensive garter snake, the rattlesnake, and the immense black snake like the great cowhide whip of the drivers of vehicles of primitive constructions which were drawn by oxen. Rattlesnakes abounded, and they were killed every day in the garden, orchard or on the farm. Often when hunting strawberries or gathering wild flowers, I heard their warning rattle, and young as I was I knew that to advance or interfere meant danger. But they did not trouble me, nor did I dislike them as I did worms, while to the *bête noire* of most women, mice I paid no attention whatever; did not mind but enjoyed them and their play.

In my exhausted condition bugs and creeping things troubled me. It was when I retired, that the worse befell for my bed perfectly suited to the sportsmen and those in health, whether men or women was impossible for me. I tried my best to get used to it but it was so hard bumpy and uncomfortable that I hurt and ached all the time in every nerve trunk and could not sleep. An effort was made after a few nights to make it more comfortable for me but the necessary means were lacking. The first days slipped into a week, then into two weeks, and finally I almost never slept going to sleep perhaps at midnight and wakening at three or four o'clock in the morning, while to close my eyes was to

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see all the bugs, spiders and creeping things of infinitely greater magnitude of proportions and horrible appearance than in reality. It was a regular case of what I am in the habit of terming "jim jams", a condition which has made me very tolerant of the terrors of patients even those of the alcoholic. The altitude was more than my weakened circulatory apparatus could bear, my head ached constantly, I had no peace, nor joy; was just "pretty miserable thank God." The professional work taxed my little strength and became intensely repugnant to me. I wrote my physician of all these things, saying if he felt that the environing conditions were prejudicial and the altitude bad, tending to increase my cerebral congestion, to write, expressing his opinion and saying what I should do as I did not wish my patient to think I was leaving her unnecessarily. She knew that I was far from well, and she needed me much less than I needed rest and care. The answer came promptly, directing me to come home at once. This I did and after a few days in the city went to the quaint little village of Siasconset at the extreme end of Nantucket to spend the month of August.

The journey was exhausting, but the Sunday afternoon of my arrival was divinely beautiful and the air of that ocean environed land at its far eastern and southern extremity, the most delicious I had ever

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breathed. Not even on ship board had it seemed so pure and life giving.

I spent the month of August and the first week of September there, taking after the first three days' of hotel discomfort a furnished cottage for the balance of the season and in addition to rest playing at home-keeping, while incidentally in order to gratify my desire for achievement as well as to meet a duty I completed a piece of writing.

It was a beautiful restful holiday. No! I was not always equal—far from it—and some days it was with difficulty I found my way to the beach, but when I could not, there was my hammock on the verandah, the life-giving ocean breezes and radiance was the rule. August was compensating for July. Of the people I met a few kindred souls were cultivated, but I found that Nature, the home-keeping, my books and writing sufficed for the most part.

Towards the end of my stay, the first days of September, there were severe storms and wrecks. These with the never failing whale prevented the possibility of monotony. As I sat by my drift wood fire in the evening reading one of Stevenson's stories of shipwreck and murder the roar of the ocean, the breaking of tremendous tides along the shore and the sweep of the wind over all enveloped and environed me, providing most a realistic atmosphere. There was also suggested by the characteristic coloring of the flames

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of the burning sea saturated drift wood the beautiful and fairy like tales of chemical science. Sometimes the tragedy of shipwreck in connection with the tumult in nature depressed me greatly, but quite as often in my thought I was ready to do battle with the life-saving boat and crew for those who were endangered.

The next day in my idle lounging on the beach every bit of wreckage no matter how trivial brought me a message from the sea.

I came home very much refreshed and looking better, but of course with very limited reserve which under the pressure of work was daily exhausted. It proved to be really the only out and out rest and holiday I have had in all these years. I have been away, yes! but every time there has been a professional duty attached and as told in a subsequent chapter a business as well as professional duty. But I do not repine, only of this I am sure that this summer the most restful and enjoyable conditions which I can command shall environ me. Just now desire takes the form of a simple furnished cottage, not too remote from the heart throb of the big city to which I am accustomed, not too isolated topographically, nor yet gregariously, where I can see the first of the dawn, the rising and the setting sun, the dew on the grass, the star-lit night, watch the clouds drifting idly above me, listen to the song of the birds, feel the fresh untainted air all about



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me, busy myself with simple "homey" duties, cook even if I wish, play I am a woman not a doctor, read, write, have my music, lie in my hammock or walk and drive as conditions are best met, and best of all bring the few friends whom I love so dearly and who meet my needs so well about me for friendly communings. Never before in my life have I wished for all these things more or as much. That this is true, is due to the fact that a few years since I had to give up the housekeeping in order that neuronie energy might encompass all other duties. I miss the home feeling it gave me beyond words and can not for one moment enter into sympathy with the hotel and apartment dweller. Just a little house and a tiny acreage with content and happiness environing me is my heart's desire.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

*"You shall find them Wise on the one Side, and Fools on the Other."*

BURTON, ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY.

*"Think with the other Side."*

I HAVE never in all these years been allowed even if I would have done so had I been left to care for myself entirely, to get notions about any disability I possessed. On the contrary, I have often felt that I was to be compared with a young robin in its nest being urged to fly by its ambitious mother, and as occasionally happens even when following nature's laws undue urgency has resulted disastrously. My physician believed, as I do myself, that it was best to make diligent effort. Sometimes disaster has come. The neurasthene who gets reasonably well on his feet is after all best equipped for life's battle. The hardest cases I have had to take care of professionally are those who have acquired the rest cure habit. I have a physician under care now, this time a woman, who regrets piteously that she was not given something to feed her intelligences instead of an unqualified rest cure. Her con-

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dition at no time approached that of mine, but to-day I am infinitely stronger and more self-reliant than she. I am a constant surprise to all my friends and patients because of the amount of work I do. Everybody thinks I do it easily, but that is far from being true. When it comes to work with my pen once I get into the thought or swing of it according as it is strictly scientific or more along these lines, if not disturbed, I work readily and happily.

The years following the complete exhaustion of my supreme nerve centres were spent in hard work during the office hours and in my clinic days, but almost every moment other than the need of being in evidence at the one or the other had to be spent in the quiet of my own home usually save for a siesta, in my library where my white hammock was invitingly stretched before a beautiful grate fire of anthracite. In a negligee of the softest fabric an actual necessity for I was sensitive and hurt all over and with the Sybarite would have been conscious if there had been even a crumpled rose leaf under me, I alternated between the big Morris chair and the hammock. My hands would drop languidly by my side after a few moments' attempt to hold a paper, magazine or book, and I simply drifted. The servants would come for an order or my nurse friend drop in occasionally for a little chat, but as a rule my quiet was rarely disturbed in the afternoon and but little in the evening then

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only by the few friends so near and dear, whose spirits were of the finest and most congenial. This sounds self-indulgent, but it was not for the mornings and three afternoons were spent in the hardest kind of work and I had no choice in the intervening afternoons and all evenings but to lay down my arms.

One evening at the usual hour of his professional call on his way home to dinner the doctor had risen to go, I left my hammock and at the same time was responding to what he said. I was very tired and it was my dinner hour. Although eating but little, it was necessary to have that little at the moment it was due and after the first few weeks I have not at any time been in the habit of pouring down at more or less frequent intervals milk, raw eggs or fermented milk. I could only take care of so much food, and my good was prejudiced by adding a fraction of an ounce to my regime just as it was by permitting the intimate presence of others than my closest friends for short visits, by staying up after my regular hour for retiring or by expending a fraction of a foot pound of energy after the necessary work for the day was done. This evening I could not catch my thought and there was an indescribable sensation of exhaustion and distress in the part of my brain which had been most actively congested. Involuntarily my hand went to that part of my head when the doctor said with his reassuring smile, "Think with the other side". I

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have had to do it many times and I have never allowed any part of it to fall into disuse. It would have been very easy all along the way because of the exhaustion and fatigue which gripped me.

One afternoon while at my clinic with physician students all about me and every room full of patients, I was taken very ill with an intolerable distress in my head accompanied by a severe congestive chill. It so happened that my nurse friend had dropped in that afternoon. She left me with my most capable assistant, the son and brother of dear friends to whom I have referred, saying she would go to her apartment, leave necessary instructions as to her whereabouts, and also a message for the doctor to see me and then come to me for the night.

My assistant got a carriage and accompanied me home. I shook so violently that my tired sensitive body hurt all over and I was utterly worn. The relief of being met at my own door in response to the bell, by a flash of light and my capable Japanese servant "Ti" of blessed memory, for so I always think of him the first and best in rather an extensive experience with them, was great. He immediately lighted the library fire while I was helped to my hammock. The comfort and luxury of it all. For just a little to be watched and tended, to bask in the warmth and glow of the fire and a few minutes later to have the comfort of a favorite tippie—a cup of freshly boiled



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hot water. It seemed worth while to have suffered for the sake of all this comfort. I had had but little experience of being cared for in these ways, for I always had cared for others. In their rare occurrence they were like angels visits few and far between and appreciated to the full. I remember experiencing the same sensation as a child when I had the measles, after very excruciating earache to which I was more or less prone and in convalescence from an attack of membranous croup which would have cost me my life but for my mother's (my father was absent on professional duty) presence of mind.

In due time the nurse returned, I was made comfortable in a negligee, and a little later the doctor came. The story was told, my irritable heart action noted, a prescription written, a humorous remark as well as a reassuring comforting word and I was ordered to bed. I kept my office hours as usual the next morning although pretty wan and worn. But I did it and have every day of my life other than some Sundays and the few weeks I was kept in bed. This has been true through seven or eight successive attacks of grippe, my arch enemy. Because of my lowered vitality and resistance I fell an easy prey to any grippe microbe wandering my way. Several times I was violently ill, chills, temperature, malaise and pain requiring a long weary pull to get back to my usual condition. No doubt the attacks would

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have been much more severe, if I had not lived so quietly, regularly and eaten so abstemiously. There was no chance for the "balling up" of my leucocytes and temperatures were soon controlled. There have been two attacks when if I had not been born "to be killed with a club" I might have finished the game. The first one of these the doctor regarded seriously, while in the last one every one save the doctor and myself thought I would die. But there are some of us that never do what is expected of us and I just kept on living. A medical woman friend, another memory out of the past, used always to say to me, "you are like a cat, doctor, you always come down on your feet." But it was not only the sense of utter cerebral fatigue with which I had to contend, and which I have overcome many times, not only by thinking with the other side, but by calling upon and re-educating the reserve energy of my cerebral neurons, but with the untoward mental processes characteristic of these cases.

I had no time to dwell upon them unduly, but they were always present and the never ending round of purposeless thought has worn me more than my work. I never invited it, did every thing to avoid it, but sometimes found it very difficult with my disturbed cerebral circulation to secure perfect control.

I have said but little as to the neurasthene's mental processes and the disposition to magnify and distort

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everything in their own minds, the doubts and apprehensions, obsessions even. They exist and prejudice the individual's well being in every sense. The day's duties are lived over long before they have begun. Matters the most trivial are discussed with oneself, not audibly, but in thought, until the neurons of the supreme centers are tired and worn. There is no normal psychical elimination and the result is the autointoxication which comes from this purposeless activity and ceaseless reiteration.

I am constantly advised to lie down and do nothing—to stay in bed late in the morning. In those ways trouble is apt to come. Energy that is usefully directed usually is productive of good, but energy that is permitted to run to waste or to follow lines of least resistance as in the mountain torrent, may be and usually is productive of mischief to a greater or less extent. This truth I have always recognized, but it was borne in upon me when on my ill fated trip at the time of my complete exhaustion.

In going from London to Southampton I was placed in a compartment with a very charming group of English people—a gentleman and two ladies—. They were on their way across the Channel and to the picturesque and interesting Brittany country. My appearance was such that the condition of impaired health was easily read without a word from me. It was in this instance. At the usual hour for afternoon

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tea the travelling hamper was opened and tea was deftly and daintily made by the gentleman, whose appearance bespoke the man who suffered pain. I found later that it was an excruciating sciatica and he at once had all my sympathy, for I had not been without it for nearly three years then. The ladies arranged the thin bread and butter and cakes to the convenience of all. I was at once most hospitably and cordially invited to share with them a cup of tea and some refreshment. The English people do this sort of thing with a simplicity that gives their hospitable act a charm beyond words. It was not the material food that appealed to me, but the frank expression of hospitality and the gracious manner in which it was given. This led to conversation and without my referring to my illness the gentleman expressed his interest and concern, saying that I looked very ill and weak. To this I simply answered that I was a physician, that I had overdone and had taken the voyage across with the hope of benefit, but that I was returning in no better condition than when I left home and that I was hastening back to try to get on my feet for my season's work. He replied that it was unfortunate that I felt I must go before improvement had been established and that while I needed rest and change sadly, I needed also to have my "brain fed", without that I would make slow progress. I was most forcibly impressed, it was no new

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truth, but coming as it did from a layman, a stranger on hospitality intent, it seemed to have a new meaning.

During these weary years my effort has constantly been to keep my intelligence fed with things other than professional, for neuronc activity has been so long and so strenuously concerned with those matters that I have no choice, but to seek other lines of thought and work in obtaining the necessary pabulum. Fiction is used when exhaustion is so great that neuronc activity is prejudicial, but while this is true, it must have vital thought. Trash will not answer ever. But even so, fiction does not suffice. The best food is that which invites active intelligent interest and the more nearly one's heart and soul, using these terms in their accustomed figurative sense, are implicated in this interest, the better it is for the tired nerve centers.

That the solar plexus is the seat of what we choose to call soul and the great sympathetic nerve system, that of the moral nature, seems from much personal and clinical observation to be true. Let sordid work take on a personal charm through any of the various channels that brings happy thought, anticipation hope, and later confirmation in realization or the culmination of one's hopes and it may be carried on to one's well being, not to their undoing. But on the other hand let there be hours and days of hard work,



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listening only to the woes and miseries of others, spending every atom of electrical force and radiance environed in one's chemical cells, then there is no lift, physiological processes are interfered with, or there is an absolute arrest. The result is disastrous. I have found it especially difficult, because after strenuous office hours motor ability was not sufficient to encompass change of environment, while exhaustion was so great that carriage exercise required an expenditure of energy above and beyond my capacity. The effect of overwork without any uplift is always disastrously experienced in my abdominal brain and the cerebral centers suffer through that.

In a very extensive experience in the care of these cases in a private home for them I have invited mental activity, diversion in every way that I could devise, neglecting no opportunity for uplift and inspiration. In doing it for others I have necessarily added to my own exhaustion, the reward came through their betterment.

What a world it would be if we could let the best of which we are capable in thought and deed shine out in this way. To secure the best good, however, the degradation of fatigue should not come through or by reason of the effort. That should be so spontaneous, happy and really effortless, as to secure result without. Physicians owe it to themselves as well as to their patients to look well to this part of their

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work. Its neglect is a very serious reflection and by reason of it their patients seek the relief to be found in the various cults. It could be so much more sanely and sensibly done by the physician, if he but realized the mental and moral as well as physical need of those seeking his services. There is not needed any especial or significant attitude, just that of a wholesome inspiring nature, blessed with a desire to give hope, courage, content and happiness to their fellow creatures.

As I write there comes a blessed memory to me that rarely has or does a patient leave my office without saying, "I feel better than when I came." To feel better is to be better despite the nature of the pathology. It does not necessarily imply the removal of the latter, but it does imply its lessened activity—temporarily at least.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

*"Type of the Wise who Soar but never Roam,  
True to the kindred Points of Heaven and Home."*

WORDSWORTH: TO A SKYLARK.

*"And to me  
High Mountains are a Feeling, but the Hum  
Of Human Cities Torture."*

BYRON: CHILDE HAROLD.

*"Never mind you can obtain your Revenge by  
writing the Autobiography of a Neurasthene."*

EIGHT years after my crash and ten years from my first knowing her, my dear gracious lady, whose friendship meant so much to me, died. The season had been full as usual of work, I was utterly worn—there never was time to get rested, and as is always the case under such conditions, grief told on me very badly. I have missed her all these years and shall as long as I live, unless perchance some other equally congenial and satisfying friend comes into my life. Even so she will never be forgotten and in memory I shall often relive the precious hours spent with her. At the time a good deal of care,

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anxiety and additional financial strain was mine because of duties other than to myself and my professional obligations. I was also engaged in extra work with my pen. The housekeeping care fell heavily and was very different from the homekeeping which I had known the most of my life and which is after all the highest and best form of living. I decided very suddenly to give it up. This is my habit even when very considerable interests are at stake. I seem to arrive at a decision which is intuitive. I fancy we all do, if we analyze our mental processes, and it is after all an intellectual cognition. I go over the pros and cons of a proposition, but even if I seem to be undecided for a time, I am always conscious, that back, shall I say in my subconscious mind, I know exactly what I am going to do. This characteristic I do not feel applies with the same force to the trivial details of life, for example whether I shall put on one or another gown in the morning, as it does to the larger interests. They are almost without exception met very promptly and decisively.

In giving it up, I came later on to realize very keenly that it had been home after all. Never shall I forget the sense of satisfaction with which I took possession of it. I had been living in an apartment, and to be able once more to shut my garden gate behind me and to enter my own house, was a joy. But I knew I had acted wisely, for in addition to the never

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ending care it was very expensive and I realized that the years were not bringing me additional reserve of energy, therefore the need must be met by a conservation of that which I possessed. For over a year I rarely went to bed that my old home did not stand out before me with its beautiful great rooms and sunlight, but more than that, the precious associations and memories clustered around its hearthstone.

Yes! In it I had known the keenest physical suffering and most complete exhaustion. But even so, my heart hungered after and longed for it, for the friends who had slipped away somehow seemed nearer to me there than in strange places. I once more domiciled myself in a suite of large, airy, sunny rooms which my friends and patients have always liked, but which for a long time seemed absolutely unhomelike to me. This change was made now five years since, but from the first and until within this last year I have walked blocks out of my way to avoid passing the old house. I became so utterly home-sick, that in the spring following I took a house out of town for a year and fitted it up very happily. The offices remained as they were in the city, and I went back and forth to my office hour and professional visits, daily during the spring and three times a week when the warmer weather came. My physician did not consent to this, nor did he say not to do it—only “I am afraid you cannot stand it.” It is the only



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time I have gone contrary to his advice and I laughingly tell him that, while I came to grief, I had come to grief sometimes when following it. At any rate, the strangeness, loneliness, extra fatigue, the dampness from the water, a land locked body was near, the loss of friends by death and removal beyond my horizon, the stress of work and strain of meeting my obligations to life, all proved too much for me and I broke again. I had no strength, could not walk a block without great fatigue, just dragged myself along perfunctorily. I was horribly depressed, and finally I decided to give up the house and return to the city and to my apartment. This I did, subletting it for the balance of the year. Gradually I have grown accustomed to the change and now take comfort and satisfaction in my environment, but for fully a year and a half, if not two years, I suffered keenly in my absence from the old home.

The winter following this experience, in a visit I had to make in the lower and more canon-like streets of the city, where sunlight rarely enters and the reek and filth fills the air with noisome smell, while dampness reigns supreme, I encountered a grippe microbe, which, judging from the severity of the illness following, must have had the proportions of the dragon in Siegfried. At any rate, I was ill, it seemed to me more ill than ever before, although my physician thinks there was one other time when I was really

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more ill and much nearer the danger point. However that may be, I did not suffer such excruciating pain in my head and right auditory nerve at that time as this. Those who saw me other than the doctor thought I would die. I dropped my flesh by the pound and I had not the pounds to spare. Despite the pain and my really serious illness I dressed and went into my office every day, but an assistant did the work. For four weeks I was housed. At the expiration of that time I went out of town to make a professional visit to a house full of patients, ill with the same trouble. Two more weeks I remained housed. Not that I was worse from my trip, but I had no strength and there were all the untoward conditions characteristic of March in a northern sea-environed land.

It was during this illness that one evening at the time of his belated visit and in response to my expressions of pain—pain so severe that as I write of it, I feel, and now I have strength and health as compared with then, that should I have to endure it again I should want to die at once, for the anguish would be beyond me—and discouragement, my physician said to me: “Never mind, you can obtain your revenge by writing the autobiography of a neurasthene”. The seed fell on fruitful ground, and in the weary days of convalescence when strength would permit, I penned a few, but very few of these pages. The thought has

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ever remained with me, and before undertaking many of the other things which I have in my mind to do in a part of my leisure time, to the bettering of conditions, the more complete rounding out of life's experiences as well as the pleasuring of myself, an impelling force compels me to have this story chronicled.

I made a good recovery and in the summer which followed spent three months in the hill country farther north, engaged in an interesting professional duty as well as in an effort to store up a reserve of neuronc energy. Luckily, while disadvantageously placed in some respects, the woman with whom I stayed for those months, devoted herself to providing me with dainty and easily digested food. With the utter quiet, the beauty of hill, vale, woodland, river and distant mountains, the life-giving air, an ability to be much in the open, despite a good deal of professional care, I gained in strength and avoirdupois. Since that time I have worked harder than ever and to the good. I have not been equal always, far from it, but the needs of those seeking me as well as my own have been met and not only as well met as in former years, but better. After all the experience of the passing years brings so much of good in one's own development which one can apply helpfully to the good of others. Here again is one of life's compensations. In youth and the heyday of life we look upon any one who has reached middle age with a degree of

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pity and commiseration that is entirely uncalled for. Every year of life, so at least I find it, brings with it compensations, while the succession of years brings opportunity for the acquirement of additional knowledge as well as for achievement. It is my purpose always to add something each year to my mental equipment to the betterment of myself and others.

The experience of this long summer time away from the heat, noise and turmoil of the city was to me delightful, and in the added zest and interest of my work content walked alongside of the happiness which always comes with a duty conscientiously met. From my physical betterment there came a deep and abiding comfort. This improvement was not lasting, but could have been had there been less work and strain. The harvest was ready for my reaping, and I did not dare be found wanting. Still these duties might all have been more happily met, had there not been anxiety and extra work besides, because of the serious illness of a member of my distant family. But then that is life, and there is nothing to do but to accept what comes, controlling the conditions as best one can.

The professional interest of this summer was engrossing and in it I had great satisfaction, but more than that the patient embodied in himself a very charming and lovable personality. Although of world-wide reputation, there was neither pose nor affectation, no panoply of artificiality, just sweetness,

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humility, generous instincts, simplicity and directness. So far as I have known them, this is true of the really great ones of the earth whatever their pursuit, whether scientists, writers or artists. Their lives are spent in the doing of their work, with the best the world knows and it seems to me they instinctively learn to rise above so much that is petty and groveling in life and with which we really need have no concern. With the right mental attitude the most menial even of life's duties may be met on the plane of high living and thinking. In order, however, to secure and maintain this attitude, there should be correct living which after all is simply physiological living. The individual who maintains the best physiologic condition, even though it must be secured by restricting his life, instinctively deports himself in relation to life its duties and humanities ideally.

Through this charming patient I lived in an atmosphere of the best in literature, the drama, music and art, and it proved a great rest to me for my interests had for so long and wearily been concerned with scientific studies as well as medicine.

The so-called science of medicine is still so inexact as to fail in the giving of satisfaction as pure science does and at the same time by reason of its intensely dramatic human side is very exhausting. No! all physicians do not feel this, but the best I have known never lose sight of this aspect of the question.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*"As the unthought accident is guilty  
Of what we wildly do, so we profess  
Ourselves to be the slaves of chance, and flies  
Every wind that blows."*

SHAKESPEARE: WINTER'S TALE.

THERE is again an elemental disturbance of some description somewhere in space. For seventy-two hours I have been utterly wretched. First there were hours of increased mental activity, then came an almost intolerable anguish of brain and intelligence, while the aching way back in my eyes extends into my brain and is felt most down deep inside from the vertex or top of my head. This has been experienced in these ways ever since two successive fainting fits induced by overfatigue and anxiety from too great professional stress and strain. I was called to the telephone to get the report of an anxious daughter as to her mother's condition when in fainting I fell, striking the back of my head to the left side first and against the sharp triangular corner of a book case. Upon the return of consciousness and attempting to rise, the floor rose with me. It required the exertion

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of all my indomitable will to get to my feet, when I promptly fainted again, falling with a tremendous crash and striking the same locality against the edge of the door just where the sharp edge of the lower hinge is placed. Never shall I forget that awful sickening thud and the horrible throb and ache in my head. For nearly thirteen years my brain had never been free from congestion. First it began in the sensory cortex and, as has been told, invaded the brain itself. At all times my head has been so sensitive that if the hat brim of my neighbor in a street car for example touched mine, the jar was such torture that I almost always felt that I would prefer being hit with a club. Just so the jar of sounds, the multitudinous noises of the city, a crusade for the suppression of which would have been entered upon long before the time it was, if I had had strength to take the initiative and do my own work, and the vibrations of voices was torture. Sunlight which was essential to my wellbeing, at times could not be borne at all, and in the summer time rooms had to be kept pretty constantly darkened and ice caps worn. Unquestionably the sun stroke from which I suffered in the earlier part of my professional life, while engaged in a professional duty, was the exciting cause. For a year after it happened, although doing the hardest kind of professional work, fortunately indoors in an institution, I never went out for a drive or walk save

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in the early morning and after sunset, lived in darkened rooms, employed a secretary because of my eyes diagonised by my oculist as a retinitis but by myself as retinal congestion.

Upon my recovery from my second attack of syncope I managed by holding on to doors, walls, half creeping and walking, to get into an adjoining room, but after a few steps finding myself going again, I let myself down on the floor in a recumbent position on the rug. For some minutes I did not move, did not dare to do so, for the distress in my head was so great that I simply could not take any chances. Yes! I was alone. I put my hand to my head and brought it away wet. Then I knew I had cut the scalp, but that did not trouble me save for the uncleanly sensation—the damage whatever its nature I felt was deeper in. Finally I got into my bed room—it was night—and sitting on the bed tried to clean my blood-soaked hair and then made my preparations for the night. But on account of my great distress I felt I had better telephone the doctor. By dint of holding on to the furniture I got to the telephone, took off the receiver, but feeling myself going, managed to hang up the receiver and crawl to the bed. The luxury of arriving. Immediately upon assuming the recumbent position and to the left side, the point of injury, there was experienced the sensation of the bed rising at the foot and the head going down to the

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floor. At the same time there was experienced a severe pain in my left ear and a feeling as though some foreign body was lodged there just back of the drum and also a pain in my throat on that side. Because of the feeling of obstruction I tried if inflating my Eustachian tube or going through the act of blowing my nose would not secure relief, but neither the one act nor the other could be performed on account of the great distress in ear and throat. The question of a possible dislodgement of a bit of wax was carefully considered, but nothing could be found in the auditory canal. The slightest change in position and the bed would again rise at the foot end, while the pain in the head was extreme. The next day my physician came. When he had heard all about my fainting and after having scolded me soundly for making two and three visits a day to the bedside of a very sick patient in addition to my office hours because of the wishes of the patient and her daughter, we talked the symptoms over, taking into consideration the intimate anatomy and also physiological relations of the structures involved, and agreed that the force of the concussion must have expended itself at the base of the brain and upon the semicircular canals. I was treated again to the kindly quizzical smile and humorously told that "there was not blood enough to go round". For six months upon resuming the recumbent and left lateral position the bed continued to stand upon

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its head while a quick turn brought the same sensation. In order to minimize the distress due to this phenomenon, I lifted my head absolutely free from the pillow and then let myself down well towards the front so as not to touch the injured spot which somehow seemed to localize the point of mischief. The aggravation of the symptoms was due, not as might be inferred, from pressure but from position and consequent disturbance of physical conditions within the semicircular canals. We agreed that the ear condition should not be submitted to an aural specialist, simply because we both knew that this was a time and a condition when nature was the kindest, best and most intelligent physician. I was wan and worn in appearance, and while I visited my patient the next day, a medical assistant went with me although I preferred he should not. I kept my office hours at all times and made the necessary calls on this patient for some days after the accident or until her death.

From the time of the injury my digestion became less good, my stomach extremely sensitive, the sense of nausea such as is felt in greater or less degree always from injury at the base of the brain was experienced and the only way I could take food was by using champagne to the amount of a tablespoonful with my luncheon and dinner. I am very susceptible to the influence of any sort of spirits, vinous or malt liquor and need only to eat a piece of pickle or take beef



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juice to feel as though I had taken one or the other. My pathologist says he can not get a "jag" so cheaply.

Gradually nerve tone improved, but the effects of this injury still remain with me. Atmospheric changes emphasize the distress. The sense of heaviness and weight at the base of my brain is very great as well as the pain through the eyes deep into the centre of things to the vertex. It is apt to be accompanied by a feeling of mental anguish, from which I cannot get away. It is not a feeling of depression, although naturally it depresses me. It is as I have said, a mental anguish, and the sensation is of a physical condition from which I cannot escape. This has been so great for the past forty-eight hours that I have been absolutely no good, at least from my point of view. Every neuron of my supreme nerve centres I fancy is experiencing the same sort of distress which in peripheral conditions we know as neuralgia, a neuronic anguish. I long intensely in such untoward weather conditions for a life in a sunny land—not too bright, but genial warmth and a *dolce far niente* existence. Oh yes, I have earned it, and if I may believe what is said, I have an extensive bank account "up yonder" greater than it is here, but unfortunately I have no way of securing access to the paying teller.

When I have an opportunity I sit down before a

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great big arc light and allow its radiant energy sifted through a screen of blue glass to flood my eyes and the base of my brain. In this way I am always relieved, but do not actually find myself again until the storm breaks. There is a northeast wind, the sky is lowering the air most chill and penetrating. For half an hour in the early morning the sun shone, the air was less damp and chill, for the wind had not then changed, and I thought relief was in sight. But not yet. Let the normal interchange of courtesies in my chemical cells be interfered with, and they constantly are by reason of my chronic fatigue as well as by the changes induced in osmosis by reason of untoward barometric conditions; for if the sun disappears, as it often does for consecutive days in the sea bound northern climate, the pressure of light is withdrawn from the body's surface, or by the ingestion of more than my allowance of "birdseed" or the wrong kind of food, by the slightest excess, one record of music too much in my glorified gramophone, the simplest social diversion, and all this neuronc anguish in the very centre of my brain is accentuated, while the persistence of anxious thought increases the congestion. This interferes with happy functioning of the intelligence, does not prevent it, but makes it difficult, fatiguing, sometimes to me purposeless, never to a patient if I am to believe them. Routine duties are always met.

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The atmospheric disturbances which I felt so keenly at this time, culminated locally at about eight o'clock of the third day, when a period of greater mental comfort ensued. Farther afield, within a radius of two thousand miles there had been severe and extensive elemental disturbances, high winds almost cyclonic in nature with rain and sleet.

When a medical student I used to be tremendously interested in the experiments of the professor of physiology, another man of great intellectual vigor, clever and telling conceits, great ability as a teacher, of Scotch birth and one of nature's noblemen. In an acquaintance extending over a quarter of century I never knew an act of his incompatible with what I have said. His teaching resulted in inspiring me with the greatest interest and love for physiological truths, his dry rather sarcastic wit impressed many a wholesome lesson and his beautiful, sincere interest in his work and in humanity endeared him to us all. Cut off untimely through his devotion to his profession, and it was devotion, not the aggrandisement of wealth, his loss remains felt throughout his wide circle of friends, students and patients. Not many years my senior I shared with him the honor of the friendship and confidence of our mutual preceptor whose teaching and practice left an impress of the right sort on both our minds.

None of the experimental work interested me more

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or as much as those upon the spinal cord and brain. The classic experiments upon a pigeon involving injury to the semicircular canals with the resulting disturbances of equilibrium, to the point of not being able to stand at all were fascinating to me in the extreme. Did I have a certain prescience that I was going to experience in a degree the sensations of the poor unbalanced birds with the pendulum-like movements of their heads? Now while I had no pendulum-like movements save in the first week from the accident and then not noticeable to others, just a sensation of desiring to execute movements similar to those of a Chinese mandarin in his kowtowing, my equilibrium was disturbed for some weeks, I had to move more carefully than was my wont (I usually go as though shot out of catapult, at any rate am very quick, active and alert), did not dare to jump up quickly and had the same sense of disturbed equilibrium when sitting in a reclining attitude with my head in left latero-posterior position. I lived very quietly, but worked very hard. Gradually all these sensations have grown less and less, but the distress in untoward atmospheric conditions is great as I have described. On radiant days a very considerable degree of comfort is experienced sometimes a sense of extreme well being.

There must as a result of two successive falls, striking practically the same spot each time, have been

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a disturbance in the current of the endo-lymph. The sensation of backward and forward movements of my head, also the sinking of the head of the bed to the floor indicated that the expenditure of energy was most felt by the posterior vertical canals, while the sense of disturbed equilibrium pointed to a more or less general disturbance in this current.

The withdrawal of radiance from which the lowered barometric pressure is inseparable, interferes tremendously with the amount of atmospheric pressure to which the body surfaces is subjected normally. There are no startling results when light impinges on very large bodies, as for example being lifted from one's feet and tossed into space.

Let the impact of light on exceedingly small masses be calculated and the relation between light pressure and weight (gravitational pull), then the mechanical possibilities of a shimmering ray becomes stupendous. There is a great solar motor on an ostrich farm in Pasadena which has an indicated output of eleven horsepower with two hundred and ten pounds of steam, which can pump water at a maximum rate of 1,400 gallons per minute. If the radiant energy falling upon the deck of an ocean liner could be utilized and the radiation were not cut off by air, it is sufficient to propel the ship with greater speed than is now obtained from carbon.

Pressure acts superficially, it is proportional in



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amount to the surface. On the other hand the entire mass is affected by weight or gravitation. This has been illustrated as follows. Let a cannon ball weighing one thousand pounds be divided into ten balls of one hundred pounds each, the total weight remains the same, but the surface presented by the ten balls is greater than the original ball. This means a greater area presented to the pressure of light. If this process of subdivision be continued until many little balls no larger than buskshot are produced, an enormous superficial area is obtained. The total weight however still remains the same. There is no change proportionally in the gravitational pull on the entire mass of little balls, but the effect of radiation is proportionally increased. According to a computation by the savant Arrhenius a point is finally reached, where the balls obtained are so small that the light pressure exactly counterbalances the pull of gravitation. In other words, the globules obtained will remain suspended, wherever they may happen to be placed—pulled by solar gravitation and pushed by light with equal strength in opposite direction, perfectly balanced in the great scales of cosmic forces.

This perfect balance between the pull of solar gravitation and the push from light pressure means absolutely physiological processes. It is the perfection of life. Chemical actions and reactions are clean cut, the transference of fluid of the one density to that of

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another or osmosis is normal, conditioning the electrical stimulus and radiance within the cell. Life goes on in a fashion even though this perfect balance does not exist at all times, but it is a life devoid of the best effort and result, not to speak of a life, in those more sensitively attuned, of pain and diminished effort.

In the soul saturated atmosphere according to the theory of Fournier d'Albe the pressure of radiance must be more actively in evidence and the pull of solar gravitation proportionate, else the soul life he predicates would be impossible.

Unquestionably the sensation in the ear of the injured side, my good one, is largely due to whatever prejudices and disturbs cell function. It finds its local expression there because of the traumatism, but it is evidenced in ways that are general as well. There is a definition of the bones of the cranium within and without as well as those of the left superior maxilla by reason of the neuralgic outlining that is most uncanny. To have consciousness of the shape of bones within is not usual and adds materially to the pain due to consciousness of the nerves and structures.

The occipital and sub-occipital aching, more than the usual neurasthenic ache is difficult to endure. It is accentuated not only by unfavorable weather conditions, but by overwork or impaired nutrition. Consciousness of disturbances of the great sympathetic

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nervous system of the abdominal brain is much greater than ever before. In fact this is one of the experiences, which I gladly would have done without, and in retrospect I can but regret that I did not take the vacation I needed and leave the patient to pass beyond under the ministrations of another. But that is not my nature. I sometimes wish it were, for after all while I make a joke of all these things, I have grown very tired of pain and disability.

I know of nothing that would do me any more good or as much, as to be enveloped in "Spanish sunshine" as a friend sojourning in that sunny land has wished for me. Probably by midsummer I shall have a surfeit of radiance but it is not human nature to see it that way in February and March.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*"Take thy lute, wench: my soul grows sad with troubles."*

*"Sing and disperse them, if thou canst." \* \* \**

*"\* \* \* In sweet music is such art:*

*"Killing care and grief of heart.*

*"Fall asleep, or, hearing, die."*

SHAKESPEARE, HENRY VIII.

**I**T was not until nearly thirteen years from the most profound exhaustion of my cerebral centres, and fifteen from the "spraining of my brain", that I came to feel it my right as well as privilege to try to live my own life.

For many years the care of others was paramount. The need must still remains, but it has become more nearly possible to expend my energies in the direction of conservation of financial potentialities and professional achievements rather than to fight my way inch by inch. I had become very neurasthenic again. The year had been full of hard work, day after day without any respite or change. I had carried the burdens which others brought to me because of illness and grief, even to those of a scientific friend on the other side of the water whom I had never met, until I was supersaturated. My necessary isolation in

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order to conserve energy left me without opportunity for any inspiring uplift.

This matter of change had been my *bete noir* all these years. Compelled to work for the daily needs of life, impelled to the highest mental activity always, lacking in happiness and content unless achieving, there was never enough of me to endure any less comfortable surroundings, than I had provided for myself. Born, so to speak, in the midst of illimitable space, on the western prairie, even when well I could never seem to breathe and live, if I were shut in. Fortunately my home during these years afforded me abundant space, light and air. There were great, old-fashioned high ceilinged rooms with large folding doors, by means of which the drawing room floor could all be made one, windows on every side but one, extending to the floor and open fires everywhere. Here I had space, air, sunshine galore, hours of indoor quiet, although the roar of the busy city was all about me without. My bedroom was spacious, well ventilated, sunny, while my eastern windows looked out upon the green-clad walls of the house beyond my garden gate. I had taken it, because it was an ideal physician's location and had been occupied by none other for nearly twenty years. I could not afford such comfort elsewhere for any part of the summer months, could not receive the same care and attention in the matter of food, as I had in



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my own house, and more than all could not endure travel, whether by rail, water or in a carriage. But at this time I had been out of town for two months enduring, as best I could, the discomforts of hotel environment and the unwholesome menu provided, of which, however, I partook very sparingly always. During that time I had been overlooking improvements on a country property. It was a matter involving a considerable expenditure of money, but it was not undertaken without knowing the amount, where it was coming from for immediate use and how I was to be reimbursed. Despite all this, however, and despite the fact that I approached the matter in a perfectly philosophical spirit, knowing that the work tended to the assurance of an ultimate constant and good income from the property, I found after a few weeks that I was once more becoming profoundly neurasthenic. The weakest link was actively in evidence. My poor tired brain worked overtime in the most distressing and exhausting fashion. Wherever I went, whether to overlook the work, for a motor car ride, back and forth in the train, sitting on the hotel verandah, resting in my room, or at night, I added, multiplied, divided and subtracted—in fact had such a gorge of mental arithmetic, that I was worn out. My head which has ached much of the time for many years, for as has been said, I had never been free in all these years from more or less

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congestion of my brain, ached with an unbearable intensity, while the consequent mental anguish from which I suffered, left me without happiness or hope. Again and again I sought the aid of my physician friend, and again and again he tried to serve my needs. There was no response to measures which heretofore had been efficient. I incontinently fled to the mountains for eight days, but returned without any betterment of the condition for which I went. I pulled myself together to the best of my ability, and wrote an article on a subject which was as a household word to me, but which before I got at it, cost me hours, yes, days and nights of mental pain. It seemed to me I never could do it, but I did. In the cordial complimentary reception which it received as well as in retrospect, I know it to have been a successful effort. None the less, however, it was written with an absolute questioning of my ability to do it and to do it well. This is my experience whenever I undertake a new bit of writing despite the fact that I am constantly at work. That occasion over and experiencing no relief from the incessant physical and psychical distress, I ran off to Atlantic City for a few days before settling down for the season's work and deliberately played. In a sense I enjoyed it, but not as I enjoy the accomplishment of something useful, either to my own betterment or that of others. After a few days I returned, and while assuming the

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care of my daily routine once more, I also cast about in my mind to know what I could do to secure relief from the constant distress which I suffered. The pain and mental anguish were consequent upon an aggravation of the cerebral congestion. For years chronic exhaustion and exhaustibility had been my arch enemy and lack of appetite with impaired digestive function were due not to wrong food, but to fatigue, constant care and anxiety. Drugs offered no relief. I held on during the waking hours for the sake of the oblivion which sleep would bring. I cared for nothing and almost for no one. A sense of trust, confidence, protection, had always been inspired by my physician, and as the friendship and comradeship of year after years of the relation of patient and physician slipped by, it continued in full force. This one exception remained. All the rest of the world, even my immediate relatives whom I rarely saw by reason of widely separated homes, elicited no responsive interest.

I had always been passionately fond of music. For these fourteen years it had been impossible for me to indulge this taste. For many of them I could not even endure the singing of some simple melody known to my childhood, while the distant strains of a band heard on the balcony of my window in the open air was enough to send me trembling back to my hammock,

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not a perceptible trembling, but a sense of tremor all through my body and most marked in my brain.

This would leave me limp and exhausted and was only recovered from by a period of absolute physical repose and mental inertia. The opera and especial the Wagnerian opera had been to me an unalloyed delight. I had not been able to attend for years, nor for that matter upon simple concerts either. The vitiated air inseparable from the congregation of many people, the vibrations of the latter all about me, as well as the vibrations of the music, served to exhaust every atom of stored up energy and left me quivering with exhaustion.

I had been literally starved not only during these years of invalidism, but for that matter all my life, and not only in so far as music was concerned, but the drama as well. To witness a play meant again the vitiated air of badly ventilated theatres, the ceaseless vibrations of those about me which served to sap and exhaust my energies, while the climax and anticlimax were beyond my recuperative power within the limited time afforded from one business hour to another. Fortunately my earlier theatre going had been of the best and my recollections are therefore happy. More or less a gregarious animal, I could not endure people. One or two congenial friends, preferably but one at a time, for the crossing of voices, the varying opinions voiced all served to

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weary me. Books were my constant companion, when not engaged in active professional work or busy with my pen. I only wearied of them when I no longer had sufficient energy to read. They never bored me, although in my professional reading I have written tomes in my mind, giving expression to my dissent and non-approval of the published views of other writers. But I had not the strength to really express my views on many subjects, even though they had been developed and clarified as the result of a very extensive experience.

Pure science interested me most and, when too weary for that, fiction was my solace. The habits of a lifetime had to be changed, and I no longer worked save under pressure in the evening after dinner. If not too weary, my scientific reading and medical journals commanded my attention, but I would find so much in the latter to arouse my fighting instinct that I read them at night under protest only. With good fiction it was different or interesting biography and travel. Still the novel was my stronghold. Separated from every relative I had, without strength to mix with people socially congregated, my resources were limited. The movement of the characters in a good novel peopled my solitude in the evening, not loneliness, for that I felt only occasionally, and in living their lives without any responsibility for their opinions or actions, I was rested. When



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convalescent from the utter exhaustion of cerebral centres, I could read but little, even of fiction, and other reading I had to have, for my intelligence had to be fed. The brain that is left without any interests or pabulum, for its neurons is in the way of utter ruin and destruction. I had so little physical strength that to hold a newspaper was a weariness, let alone a book. Because of inability to do and with no one peopling the silence of my home, save the servants, I was often ennuied. Music I craved then. A scientific friend who filled the chinks many a time by his talk on scientific subjects over my open fire, as I lay in my hammock, a man of such keen intelligence and so alertly alive as to be able to appreciate my need, suggested that I should get a mandolin and teach myself to pick out some simple melodies. I tried it, but my tired arms and hands with every nerve exquisitely sensitive and tender, were not equal to the task. I could only hold the instrument for a few moments, when I would sink back into my hammock to the luxury of passivity. But remember, while all this was true, every morning of my day was given to my professional duties, and three afternoons a week to clinical work. I never neglected a professional duty, and my life has literally been sacrificed to its demands. I then installed a piano and a patient, a well known musician, used to play for me in an adjoining room, when he came professionally, while he awaited my

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leisure. Likewise a woman patient. But it was in the evening I felt the need, when the days' work was done. Therefore my need was not met. The time had come again when I longed for music and longed for impressions that would sink deep down into my brain to aid in eradicating the mathematical problem constantly going on in my mind. Heretofore I had always been able to control the situation by my reading, but this time my eyes were tired beyond the oculist's power to rest with different glasses. This would never have persisted and exhausted me, as it did, had it not been for the fact that since I was fifteen, I have had to provide for myself in every relation of life, and had always carried heavy financial responsibilities. The feeling of never arriving so to speak, becomes at times well nigh insupportable. It had done so in this instance. Luckily I was stronger physically and therefore better able to cope with the problem. For the first time I fully realized that neither the most rational prescriptions of my physician, nor yet his cheerful optimism met my needs. This is an experience which our patients must often times share and which unquestionably explains their gullibility in regards to the various cults. He was always a comfort and his cheerful view of things, his sense of humor, his understanding, his positive assurance that all would yet be well, had heretofore never failed me. This time there was only a momen-

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tary sense of relief, when the intolerable distress would recur. Two years previously, because of my experience in the medical care of a well known man of sensitive nerve organization and with great appreciation of artistic values from most points of view, I had wondered vaguely if there were any of the musical mechanisms for the reproduction of voice or instruments which would be grateful to me. I had never had time nor strength to learn any instrument myself and had always laughingly threatened that, when the time of need came, I should install a hand organ and a monkey. Upon investigation I decided not. This was before that wonderful mechanism, the apotheosis of the gramophone had been brought to its present state of perfection. In looking into the matter again, I was fortunate in enlisting the services of a man who had been through a similar experience to mine in the way of a complete nerve break, but who fortunately had a father who not only helped him to the necessary rest for a time, but provided him with intelligent and watchful care, looking to his living physiologically in every way. All financial strain was removed and a sojourn under sunny skies helped him to restore his neuron energy. His recovery, therefore, had been more complete than mine. However by reason of this experience he understood my needs at once. I told him of the untoward effect of strenuous music, of loud voices, indicating that

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minor music had always appealed to me. For the first time in my life I spent money absolutely for my own delectation other than is demanded of a physician to the furthering of professional interests. With the characteristic hesitancy of a neurasthene I could not decide for a week or two. Eventually I did, although I would have found it more difficult, had it not been for the kindly offices of this gentleman. The instrument was installed, and a half dozen or more choice records of classical music sung by the best operatic stars, Schumann-Heink, Melba, Farrar, Eames, Calve, Homer and Caruso, were provided. To these were speedily added others among them a number of exquisite instrumental records as well as some of the ballads dear to my earlier life. They were selected very carefully and with an eye, or rather ear to my needs. Nothing strenuous was sent up, Chopin's Nocturne, Handel's Largo, Greig's Morning and Roger's Paraphrase of Kathleen Malvourneen, afforded me the most exquisite pleasure, while the wondrous dignity, beauty and calm of the incomparable voice of Schumann-Heink soothed and rested me as a beautiful sunset time with its wondrous glory of afterglow and exquisite tuneful silence.

The evening of its installation was a red letter one to me, and one in which my artistic senses revelled.

In the conversation which ensued the scientific principle involved came up for consideration as well as the



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historic. It was all most delightful. Recognizing that the best results were obtained by the imprisonment so to speak of sound waves in the cylinder of wax, by the horizontal rather than the perpendicular method, the work of Mr. Edison, received just and generous recognition. While personal reminiscences of the great inventor, many of which I had shared before with others who had worked with the "old man" as they fondly loved to call him, increased the charm of and interest I felt in my new possession. But the fact that many hundreds of years ago vibration was found to be in symmetrical waves by an accidental observation of a man sitting on the sea shore beating a tattoo on a drum, upon the head of which had gotten some grains of sand, and as the head vibrated, they took form, had escaped my attention in the study of physics. The story was told so charmingly that I felt as though I were in fairyland. This is by no means a new experience to me in my scientific studies, especially in the domain of physics. I was led along the evolution of the instrument up to the present date, or until the development, as I have chosen to regard it, of the apotheosis of the gramophone with its infinite artistic possibilities.

I had known of Edison's work from the first in this relation, and knew that to him all homage was due, had been invited years before to place my voice autograph on record in his laboratory, and had even used



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a business phonograph in my work, had heard the ordinary instruments, without pleasure however, but it was not till I possessed this artistic cabinet of the most satisfying of woods, mahogany with its empire decorated key and knobs and with every suggestion of mechanism shut away from view, and was taught by an artist in his understanding and use of the instrument that I realized its beautiful possibilities. In this I am not alone, nor is my appreciation due to my many years of deprivation and starved senses. My friends and patients have shared the pleasure with me and they unanimously find the music exquisitely beautiful and satisfying. This is so, because there is nothing but *music* in the records. They are selected for their melody, their harmony, their ability to speak to me. They are always played soft and low. I need no inspiration to go forth to battle. That I have been doing all my life, and achievement always had been my *métier*. I needed something to rest and divert me. In that my need has been beautifully met.

Instead of the ceaseless reiteration of tiresome figures associated with all the unfortunate impressions incident to the employment of mechanics of all sorts with their characteristic delay, there was left the beauty, melody, harmony and grandeur, according to the selection lilting its way through my brain cells. The rest and peace of it will never be forgotten, while

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life lasts, and there will ever be felt by me despite the fact that it was simply a commercial acquisition, a feeling of gratitude to the combined scientific and commercial effect which made it possible.

In time I hope the pleasure I had in the possession of my country property, beautiful to me to the point of pain, when I have sat on the verandah, overlooking the amphitheatre of encircling hills, in which it is set, forest-clad, in one direction to the remoteness of the Adirondacks while in another, the shining stretch, curves and wondrous beauty of the sound, dotted with an ever moving fleet of whitewinged yachts, and outlined by its distant island shore, met my view. For the time it is lost and the memory of the care and anxiety continues paramount.

It is an exquisite pleasure to me to watch the faces of my guests on a quiet "At Home" day, when a few congenial friends only are asked, to witness not only their appreciative intellectual pleasure, but as well in response to some dainty, beautiful bit of orchestration or voice, to see the soul shining out of their eyes. Why enlarge upon this? the reader may ask. Simply because from a professional view point I wish to make the value of music as a help to the best conditions obtainable by those who have been so unfortunate as myself, absolutely clear. I could not have it in the ordinary way, as subsequent pages will show, for I never had an opportunity of restoring nerve

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energy to such a degree that I could both work and play. The work had to be done, for I had to meet all my obligations to life. There was no one else to do it. Music is recognized by the medical profession as an agent of no small value in the care of nerve and mental cases. It acts, when used, in moderation as a physiological stimuli of very great value. In my own case it has been priceless. The sordid side of life has dropped away from me. An amount of neuronie energy which I did not realize that I possessed, has been called into activity. It is easier for me to think and express myself in intellectual ways than formerly. This effect is more marked than the effect upon my emotional nature, although I have the most exquisite pleasure in the thrillingly sweet vibrations of some of my favorite bits of music, just as I always felt the exquisite beauty of the thrush's even-song—or the robin's liquid matin notes.

The energy of my neurons had been exhausted by the sordid drudgery of much of a physician's work. This had been emphasized by my devotion to scientific studies, delightful as they were and are. In them I can still lose myself to the world, but as I can only follow the work of others, much of this sort of reading exhausts me, because it arouses desire to do which can not be satisfied. Meanwhile there lay dormant a power I knew I possessed and which all these weary years almost unconsciously I had looked

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forward to the exercise of, but which was valueless to me because of my wellnigh insupportable chronic fatigue and exhaustion. I had done everything in my power and suggested by my physician to get well, but I could not because I had to work.

In conversation one day with a young medical man of brilliant mind, a mind of such a nature and calibre, that I felt always I must help save him from himself—an alcoholic of many years standing; but at this time trying to control his vicious habit, he said "I wish I were dead". In response to my remonstrances he added "But I would like two weeks of golf first." We were both worn and depressed, he by reason of his dissipation, I by my steadfast application to work and duty. It has never been my habit to wish I were dead. I enjoy life too keenly for that. This time, however, there was nothing to lift and inspire, therefore it was easy to say "yes, I wish it were all done, but, oh, how I would like to get rested first." Poor misguided man—his own worst enemy always. It was the beginning of all his bad habits again. Despite the fact of his degeneracy, his mental activity was so great and possessed of such a charm that I did not give up until his desire for indulgence led to such dishonesty that I could no longer trust him, as I had been doing in my effort to help advance his professional interest. One day in one of our talks relative to an advance in scientific medicine he gave expression

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to a very interesting thought, but before there was time for me to respond, he added "I wonder what crevice of an alcoholic brain that came out of." I am afraid I shall always feel that, if I had had strength and money so as to have controlled his environment, he might have been saved simply because of the result obtained in a case of equal magnitude, for which I had cared, but as he had been the subject of much and earnest effort before I knew him, it was doubtful.

I believe so thoroughly that many of the untoward chronic conditions of nerve and mind can be happily met, that I do not despair when they come to me. There is a residual energy in the neuron which has not yet undergone complete degeneration that may by appropriate stimulation and education be aroused to activity. This is true in the commonly known spinal cord lesion of tabes dorsalis, and I have found it true in the alcoholic, and also in the woman in whom the moral sense seemed lacking. There are reasons for these untoward conditions—physical reasons always which of necessity react upon psychical conditions to the detriment of mind and soul. My own experience in finding an available stimulus capable of taking my inner and best self out of the sordid environment of work and worry has taught me so much that in the future professional effort will never be spared, as it never has been in the past, to help



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even the apparently most hopeless cases. Just so long as an absolute degenerative change has not taken place, there remains the possibility of arousing physiological activity within the neuron, to the betterment even if not the recovery of the patient.

But I forget my theme, just as I always do, when the tocsin of professional responsibilities is sounded.

As I have already indicated, I found that in consequence of the possession of this instrument and the ability to listen to the best of music, seated in my favorite chair by an open fire, in a room of goodly proportions, well ventilated and artistically "homey", all my old love for, and satisfaction in music, both vocal and instrumental, was aroused.

As I grew more and more accustomed to it, I felt an increased desire to go again to the opera or to the Symphony Concerts. One evening, some two months after its acquisition, I permitted a patient to beguile my attendance upon the opera. She selected *Rigoletto*, but long before its conclusion I was conscious of neither enjoyment, melody nor harmony. My sense of duty and the fitness of things kept me until its close. So complete was my exhaustion that I have no memory save that of a confusion of sights and sounds, which after all characterizes much of opera. My neurons had completely failed to register a single note of satisfying melody. All that remained was the, to me, irritating orchestral refrain, which was

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absolutely unsatisfying and fatiguing beyond words. This despite an all star cast. So painful and exhausting was its constant reiteration in my brain that I could not get quiet nor comfortable upon my return home.

In my discomfort and despair at the prospect of a sleepless night I placed in the instrument the record of a ballad, sung by a beautiful sympathetic tenor voice, and as the pleasing strains filled the room, the memory of the irritating and exhausting sounds and the confusion of scene slipped away, and by the time I was ready to retire, I felt reposed and able to read a few pages, as was my custom. Sleep came less readily than usual, but my better physical condition helped me to woo the drowsy god much more quickly, than formerly.

The morning found me exhausted, however. I did not want to hear the sound of a voice. The hum of the city's noise I was accustomed to and, although exhausting, I could within the walls of my apartment shut the worst of it out of my consciousness.

Fortunately it was a Sunday morning. There was no office hour, and no one to disturb the quiet of my apartment. My writing table was littered with all the unfinished ends of the work of a professional person. There were letters to write, literally from one end of the world to another. Case books and ledgers needed attention, but after a few moments' effort I

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laid my pen down, walked to the library and ensconced myself in an easy chair with a book. By afternoon I had stored up sufficient energy to enable me to write the home letter due, but the sun went down with nothing else accomplished. This was not all. It took me weeks to get over the exhaustion. All this fatigue seemed so purposeless, and I could not be patient for having permitted myself such an experience. Had it only left me with one blessed memory of pure harmony, but it did not. This was partly the character of the opera. Had it been a different kind of music, while the exhaustion would have been as great, there might have remained at least the memory of one bit of pleasing melody. At least this is the impression which remains with me.

A month later, the Sunday following Christmas day, I went to the gala Wagner performance by the New York Symphony, Frank Damrosch, conductor.

My years of deprivation rendered me all the more keenly alive and susceptible to the exquisite beauty of the Wagnerian music. His operatic scores had always appealed to me, as French and Italian opera never did. I had not only a feeling of the sense harmony, but of intellectual pleasure as well. My soul particles, or "psychomeres" soared into the realms of purest and most exquisite pleasure, as I listened again to the prelude of Lohengrin, Tannhauser's Pilgrimage to Rome, the Prayer from Act

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III of Tannhauser, the Magic of St. John's Eve from Die Meistersinger, the Siefried Idyll, Siegfried pressing through the flames surrounding the sleeping Brunhilde, and the Prelude and Finale from Tristan and Isolde. I was in the seventh heaven of delight and, although conscious of fatigue, my neurons registered the exquisite melody and the intellectual striving. I came home charmed, stimulated, and felt despite fatigue as though I had been above and beyond. At the same time I realized more keenly than I had from time to time, how I had been cheated and defrauded of my birthright. As I write that sentence, I involuntarily pause, for there rise before me the beds of the sick, suffering, to whom I have ministered, the days and years of striving to teach those who came to me for advice, the better way of living which always means health, the confessions to which I have patiently listened waiting until I could speak the words of comfort and help so sadly needed directing the way to health of body and mind, the knowledge that I have never failed to "stand by" when needed, that to the pale-faced pathetic-eyed daughter whose mother's doom I had pronounced. I did not say nay, when she said "Don't go for your vacation yet, doctor (I had never had but one or two in all my life, and they were usually of work-a-day character), I do not think you will have to wait long," although before the end came, it meant such exhaustion for me

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as to lead to an accident from the effects of which I shall never recover, and I can but ask, why should I regret not having taken of life a surfeit of pleasure, when I could do these things by giving up the pleasuring of self. In my case only one thing could be done, and such talents as were my endowment have been laid on the altar of my profession, to which in my teens I felled impelled.

Better to see the face of the suffering, dying even, light up on entering the sickroom, to hear almost the last words in a cheery voice of one just on this side of the hereafter, "Oh, there is my doctor, I am so glad you have come; you have won out, I have no pain and I am better—much better", than to have linger in neuronie memory the strains of music only, no matter how satisfying, enthralling and uplifting they may have been.

Of course, my friends think it all wrong, and my physician calls me to account in no measured terms ever and anon. Yet with all my apparent carelessness and neglect of my physical self, it really does not exist. I am careful and cautious to a degree in most things. My work must be done and well done and I must do it according to my own lights, not according to others. Humanity demands that of me and one must be true to one's self.

My necessarily shut-in life other than professional hours renders me therefore very grateful to those



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who have made it possible for me to again be rested, enthralled and inspired by beautiful music. I suffer no deprivation through the absence of the singers or players physical presence. On the contrary, the only deprivation is the lack of an invisible sprite whose duty should be the removal and placing of the desired records.

Occasionally a very congenial friend, who instinctively recognizes that my two hands are tired as well as my brain, does this for me to my very great comfort and enjoyment.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*"Psychic Susceptibility and Psychic Control or The Wireless Transmission of Thought or Brain Waves by the "Carriers of the Air".*

**I**T is nearly fifteen years since I "sprained my brain", and nearly thirteen years since I smashed it entirely. Many of the untoward conditions still remain however. Yesterday I was on the heights, happy and equal to every effort. The day was devoted to my professional work, and I gave of my largesse, counsel, cheer, encouragement, smiles and jokes to each and every one, as I felt their need would best be met. In addition to the routine errands at the pharmacists, the bank, the academy of medicine, I did a shopping errand and wound up with a social call. It was this latter which did the mischief, for I precipitated myself into an environment which I could not control, while more than that it delayed my dinner hour which demands, as has been noted, prompt recognition if it is only a glass of fermented milk. As a result of all this I am today tired, body and soul, weary beyond words, my head aches with an ache which beggars description, while I am gripped by the most profound depression.

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There is no uplift nor inspiration from the usual mental stimuli, nor is there physical strength for exercise. However, although the sun is shining brightly and the skies are clear, there is a barometric change due. This I know full well. It may not be here for forty-eight or more hours, but it is on the way with absolute certainty. I think if I were enveloped in cotton wool and hermetically sealed within a metal sheathed room, I would know when an easterly storm was coming and long before the veering wind, lowered barometer and enveloping gloom of the foggy atmosphere told the story. This, which has always been more or less true, was increased by my illness, but the injury which I received in two successive fainting fits to my head, which were induced by the extreme of fatigue and exhaustion, has emphasized it. These lines, however, penned almost thirteen years after the very complete exhaustion of my supreme nerve centres, had their inspiration, if inspiration can be said to exist under such circumstances, in the untoward condition produced by a storm, accompanied by winds and heavy snow fall, followed by a drop in the temperature, with lessened barometric pressure and the best of electrical conditions. Seventy-two hours before it came I was restless with a nameless restlessness, moving about from one thing to another, not desiring to read consecutively nor think along the lines of my work as was my wont. I

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was also tired—oh, so tired and depressed to a degree. This is what happens always, and the seismic disturbances of this winter, 1908-1909, although far away, had unquestionably exercised a profound influence upon the earth which could readily be appreciated by a sensitive nerve organization. The same force which causes the trembling of the sensitive seismic needle is capable of causing disturbances in a nerve organization so sensitively attuned as was mine. I have been most wakeful, not the distressing insomnia of the years before and following the breaking down, but wide awake, alert, intolerant of repose, but happy and contented, despite my numerous sunrise experiences. I call them sunrise “jags” in order to keep my friends from taking them seriously. They think I should stay in bed until the conventional city hour. After all, why should I not be up before the first of the dawning? Why not enjoy one of the most beautiful sights to be seen on this beautiful earth, and why not have the soul pleasure which comes too seldom in this busy work-a-day world? It is not conventional in a big city, unless one labors with hands and pick-axe, to rise before the sun, but it is my delight and always has been from my childhood to be astir, that I might feel the first mysterious movement of the dawn, and mine has been the triumph and glory when his royal majesty appeared. Similarly, the sunsets have drawn me along the shafts of light,

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into the sunset's jewelled splendor. Had I lived in the days of the sun worshippers I could readily have become one of them.

I am constantly picking up etheric vibrations, and unless saturated with the toxins of fatigue, have a prescience of coming events or the dawning of new truths. In order to keep at least one foot on earth in its relation to my work, I regard it simply as a scientific imagination. It is possessed by many others and life would be despoiled where I deprived of mine. I never lose sight of scientific facts however.

The day the storm whose coming had been told me by the "carriers of the air" or etheric vibrations to which I was attuned, without any knowledge of weather forecast, any nerve or muscle pain, I was up at half past five and seated at my writing at a few minutes after six o'clock. There had been days of warmth, melting snow, rain, fog and storm. I had seen no forecast of a change. I longed for it, not alone because of what it meant to me, for without radiance I am crushed, but because of the profound depression of a friend who was in great grief. I felt that if the sun would only shine and the barometric pressure change, he would be able to get a grip of himself. Radiance is essential to the best physical and physiological conditions, not to speak of life itself.

Before beginning my work, I was impelled to write



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a note to this friend who had many years since passed through a similar experience to mine in the way of exhausting his storage batteries. The memory and influence of the dear, gracious lady who had meant so much to me, influenced me always to step aside, if necessary, to brighten the way for others when I could. This friend seemed peculiarly in need of comfort. I wrote that I was having a "sunrise jag" and spoke of the unutterable beauty of the sunrise. I never saw a more beautiful one, not with vividness of coloring, but intensity giving way to an almost blackness in its depth. I said I was not crazy and that I would come down to earth a little later on. In less than an hour after the letter was written it was posted and on its way. To my great chagrin the sun disappeared and the pall of gloom and fog once more settled down over the city. I felt that my sunrise letter would not be appreciated, but I reckoned without that subtle etheric force and the transmission of our mutual brain waves by its means.

The next morning I had a letter acknowledging my "radiant letter" saying that at the same time he was walking "in the twilight of the sunrise" on the edge of a wood overlooking a beautiful river and drinking in the beauties thereof to the good of his stricken soul. He was psychic to a degree, although very practical withal. I in turn had a sufficient development of the psychic sense to receive the etheric vibrations, in oth-

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er words our mutual transmitters and receivers were in good order. Could we only listen with our soul sense, what a world would be open to us. But we can not, because we clog up the human furnace with overstocking and interfere with the clean-out actions and reactions of our chemical cells not only by too much, but by the wrong food products, by our petty cares, worries, and anxieties, too often by dissipation and lack of content. Much depends upon the state of mind which results from satisfaction with present conditions, a degree of satisfaction which holds the mind in place, excluding complaint, impatience or further desire.

We live in the midst of eternal and never ending vibrations, and our myriads of chemical cells are ceaselessly vibrating to the end that nerve energy may be stored, transmitted and recorded. This sort of psychic communication is only possible when life is simple. By our habits of life—bestial if you will, although the beasts are of better conduct than men—neuronic wires are down and the higher vibrations fail to reach us. We grovel upon the earth and are absolutely oblivious of the wealth of knowledge lying about us, of the higher realm of thought to which we may ascend, which means an atmosphere after all saturated with radiant energy, in which the “psychomeres or “soul body” of the physicist Fournier d’Albé reside. To me it seems not only possible, but proba-

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ble, that this theory of d'Albés is fundamentally true and if so that these soul particles are opaque to ultra-violet light. If they have as he believes consciousness and power of locomotion or energy it is probably obtained from the ultra-violet rays of the sun. Some day they may be made visible by a more powerful optical means, than we now possess. This I know, that the higher virtues of justice, kindness and sympathy which, according to d'Albé's theory, the "soul body" is engaged in cultivating, are infinitely more in evidence when life is simple and absolutely normal chemical action and reaction is going on in the wonderful chemism of life. That this may be true in the highest and most complex sense, there must be experienced a strange content and happiness. This must envelop and environ one to the best that is in them.

When the first announcement of Roentgen's discovery was made by the daily press, I sent the clipping to a scientific friend with the question "do you believe this is true?" By return of post came his reply: "I do not think so, but it may be." His negative opinion did not influence me, for although possessing much less knowledge, I had the prescience to know it true. Just so then do I believe it possible that more powerful optical means may come to our aid rendering visible d'Albé's "psychomeres" and that future generations may look back with a pitying

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smile on our density and ignorance of actual physical and psychical conditions.

This is the only theory in regard to life after death, which has ever appealed to me. Its ability to appeal depends upon its physical basis. There should be nothing sad about this dying, it is after all but a part of living and no thought could be more beautiful, more satisfying than that my radiant energy will live in the "psychomere"-saturated atmosphere above us, basking in a radiance far beyond what I know this beautiful winter morning, as the just risen sun floods my room, my writing and my person with delight.

To follow d'Albe still further is to pass into a state of transcendent radiance, for after thirty thousand years of this existence in the soul-saturated atmosphere, he suggests a further transformation into a state of existence suited to the environment which is to be found in interplanetary space, implying as suggested by yet another, the final cosmic union of all souls and ages. No amount of theorizing will settle this question which has excited the thought and interest of all peoples and all times. There is a natural desire for immortality inherent in all of us. In the natural processes through which our bodies pass when they are no longer needed, there is a transformation of energy which should it seems to me yield satisfying content as to immortality. However nothing

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could be more beautiful than to be a part of radiance whether sentient or not. After all radiance and life are one.

\* \* \* \* \*

I know a man, neither doctor nor priest, not a believer in new thought, mental healing, Christian Science nor the Emanuel Church movement, a man of such elemental vigor, with an appreciation of the need of mankind bought by an experience of life so varied and deep as to sound in the telling like a fairy tale, which has left him as simple and direct as a child, whose influence for good among those whom he daily meets in the routine transaction of his business is tremendous. He hates shams and veneer, his ideals of life are the noblest, and yet he has come into it all without prestige of position and birth, but out of an experience which has led to the unrolling of all the successive pages of life, to the end of knowing by heart the characters with which they are writ. This experience has served to develop and bring out the noblest in his character, has given him the widest possible humanitarianism and made him very thoughtful and gentle to and for others. His psychic control over all whom he meets in the daily walks of life is constantly being used to their good. There is no pose, no talk of suggestion, of New Thought,



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mental healing, no connection with any of the cults, while Christian Science he regards as neither Christian nor scientific. But there is simple, happy, contented living, with his kindly thought and actions reaching out to everybody with whom he comes in contact. His personal magnetism, when he chooses to use it, is very great. This is the sort of a personality which, when acting as one of the agents of these many cults and fads, gives them their prestige. But in this particular instance there is back of it all a practical working knowledge of fundamental medical science.

There is no question of the value of this power of psychic suggestion in the cure and treatment of nerve and mental states, but unless left in the hands of the thoroughly trained, experienced scientific physician, it is an agent of harm. Just as medicine is learning to know something of the physical conditions underlying nerve and mental states, why it is that nerves and nerve centres become irritable, exhausted, poisoned, why there is deficient mental activity, mental depression, elation, confusion, insanity even, the church steps in with the idea of using a similar power for the healing and welfare of the people. It is a step back into the dark ages, when priestly control, the casting out of devils, hypnosis even took the place of scientific medical care.

The extreme commercialism of everything modern

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and in the physician's life the habit of continuous scientific thought, contact with morbid conditions, the constant need of holding themselves aloof on a plane different from that of the average mortal, especially in the care of nerve and mental cases, narrows the field for frank and innocent expressions of emotion. This prejudices the best of conditions for the repression of emotions and natural instincts may readily result in a selfpoisoning of the mind, while their legitimate expression can not but favor the best of psychic elimination. Disturbance of the complex and intimate chemical changes equally well results from such a condition of things as from excess in eating, drinking and other habits of life. The habit of introspection by the varied mental cults is unwholesome in the same way. The medical mind is scientifically trained and will withstand this sort of thing better than the untrained mind of the laity. Therefore, the danger is greater to the latter. In all my hard and bitter experience I have recognized this, but with the conditions of my life it could not be helped. I have rarely given up to this side of the question, but have always resolutely set myself to work to fill up the chinks with some change of occupation, even though within my own four walls, in order to prevent the extreme of unphysiological conditions.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*"O my Dear Father, such a Change in Nature,  
"So great an Alteration in a Prince!  
"He is Bereft of all the Wealth he had;  
"The Jewel that Adorned his Features most  
"Is filch'd and stolen away—his Wits bereft him."*  
HAMLET.

MANY times my physician has said to me, I wish you were more of a pachyderm, while others who knew me well have voiced the opinion that I should be wrapped in cottonwool and carefully put out of reach of the multitudinous and distressing impressions of the exterior world.

It would have been a great comfort oftentimes in my life, and still would be, if I were so constituted that I could shut myself away from the untoward and disturbing happenings, but on the other hand it would deprive me of moments, yes hours, of the keenest pleasure. I enjoy life in all its varied complexity so keenly that it compensates to a considerable extent for the many hurts it gives. I have always been noted for my courage even as a child. The more high-spirited and uncertain of conduct a horse, the better I liked to ride him and I was always tempt-

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ing Providence to the uttermost in my daring. If it was the ridgepole of the barn, that was the height of my ambition, the ridgepole of the barn it had to be, no matter how difficult the task. If disaster came as a result of my daring, I learned not to cry, but to pick myself up and dare again. So it has been through life, and when blow after blow has fallen by reason of lack of strength of body to control my ambition, I have likened myself to a set of ninepins which had been bowled over. Perhaps a sob, a long breath, possibly a few days of being *hors du combat* and I have set my teeth together and begun again. This quality of mine has enabled me to keep the shuttle going, weaving back and forth amidst all the vicissitudes of life and despite its hardships. I have never slipped out of the traces, nor jumped over them, but have always been enabled to keep steadfastly on towards the goal I had set for myself when a child, and that to live to such purpose as would tend to the sum total of human good and for achievement. But while this is true, I have endured sufficient vicarious suffering to have atoned for the sins of the world. Just now I am having a surfeit of pain and anguish, because a medical confrere, simply an acquaintance, but a man of good mental qualities, patient, hard-working and kindly, has in the midst of the fullness of professional life, suddenly so far as those about him realized, developed delusions of grandeur. He

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had always been poor, had worked faithfully and striven hard to better his condition, but at the same time thinking more of his duty and work in a professional relation, than of personal aggrandizement. But when the balance wheel of his intelligence finally slipped its cog, his spoken and written thought all turned upon the untold wealth that was his, enabling him to shower comfort and pleasures upon those he loved and giving him a surcease from the daily grind. In this instance but not necessarily always it was the form of his delusions that named his insanity, but despite one's knowledge one can but wonder how much his constant toil, his necessary and petty economies, cooking for himself and sleeping in his office, while keeping up, as a physician must, a brave front in appearances, had to do with coloring his delusions. Poor man, hopelessly insane and doomed to the going out of his life in absolute darkness. It is inexpressibly saddening, and there seems to be something not quite right in the relation of the conscientious physician to the people, when faithful, intelligent and conscientious work should be so ill requited that years of toil leave nothing. In his insanity he is happy and content because of his delusions of grandeur. The world is at his feet and he has unlimited powers, whereas before he was eternally planning and scheming how best to keep up the appearance demanded of a physician and make both ends meet. But those of us



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whose view point is from the sane side of the borderland, have aching hearts because of the magnitude of his calamity—a reason dethroned. What a narrow line that borderland line is and how readily it can be crossed; for the crossing is very narrow and there is no depth to the separating current. But inherent in every individual there is despite all that can be said, I feel and think, a potential one way or the other that controls under adverse winds the sanity or insanity of the individual. This is a recognized truth. I am absolutely aware that I live on a different plane from the average human being; yet, despite all life's stress and the most extreme nerve exhaustion from which one can suffer, there never could arise in the minds of others a question as to my perfect mental balance. I am conscious, however, that had I a different potential, I might have worse befall me than an essential neurasthenia. Without doubt a dietary limited by my insufficient digestive capacity and a strenuous life—strenuous beyond its physical background—keeps me more keenly alive, alert and intuitive, than though my myriads of chemical cells were struggling to reach that perfect interchange of courtesies which means freedom from toxic nerves and brain. One dietary indiscretion makes me unhappy, one mouthful of food more than I need gives me not only a sense of repletion, but of physiologic

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defilement. It may be food of the simplest character, but the result is the same.

While this is true, I know if I could work less hard, have the luxury of being cared for, change my environment more often, I would eat more and have increased digestive capacity—perhaps might even become bovine in my atmosphere of placidity—I will not say contentment, for contentment I have. But I would lose precious moments on the heights, such as this midwinter morning for example. Awake since half past four, up and breakfasted at half past six o'clock and seated at my work before seven. The sun has just climbed to sufficient height to reach my lofty windows and penetrating the atmospheric gloom of fog shines in upon me as I write, illuminating and irradiating my mind, body and surroundings. Unhappiness is not possible in its radiance if wholesome habits of living form the background. How few people among city dwellers know the beauty and the precious charm of the early morning. The night may be beautiful, peaceful, glorious even, but nothing can take the place of the dawn's awakening. Before the first streak of light, in that darkest hour just before day, there comes to me a sense of possibilities, of ability to do and a feeling that the world is mine with all its wealth of knowledge and charm. The rising sun does not dissipate this, but by the time it is two or more hours high, I become conscious that

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after all the world is peopled, that it does not belong to me, and this consciousness indicates that my wireless receiver is in good working order and that I am picking up the ceaseless vibrations of the external world. Whether these be for pain or pleasure, depends upon my physical condition. If there is no immediate problem before me, if the electrical and barometric conditions are favorable to physiological conditions, beauty is everywhere, duty is a pastime, and joy and contentment reign supreme. Greig in his "Morning" has musically given a charming conception of the joy of the dawning and the triumphal entry of the sun upon the scene again.

At one time in my professional life before these experiences of mine I had staying in my house and under my guidance and care a young girl of about sixteen, whose mother had been under my care previously and had died hopelessly insane. The father of this girl, wise beyond his opportunities with a wisdom that comes from the fullness of life, rich with all its varied experiences, realized that the time had come to try and save his daughter. She had begun to show symptoms of mental disturbance and her eldest sister was insane. He came to me to know if I could take his daughter into my home, watch and guard her to the end that she might escape her mother's and sister's fate. He was not a man of means, on the contrary a hard working man at laborious and

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dirty work for a daily wage. Such were his sterling qualities of mind and heart, and so wise and farseeing was his appeal, that I told him yes and arranged the business relation to his satisfaction. She remained with me a year to the end of overcoming all evidences of mental ill health, the attainment of a perfect physical condition and the overcoming of a snobbish feeling towards her father because of the character of his work. In order to see her he was sometimes obliged to stop at my home for a few hurried moments on his way to or from his work at his luncheon time without changing his working clothes. Despite his working clothes and coal begrimed hands—he was a Welsh miner—I treated him in the same manner as the best groomed among my men friends, but this young girl could not for a long time realize what it all meant, and simply experienced a feeling of resentment because of his appearance. He could not see her otherwise, all else in his little family circle had gone down in the storm and he treasured the one that still had a chance beyond words.

The reward is that father's in which I am honored to share. Only a few years since he wrote telling me of her perfect health, of her success as a teacher and of his great gratitude to me. While these things do not pay the rent, nor buy the bread and butter, they are of value beyond words or figures.

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For this result I take no undue unction to my soul, but recognize that while she had an unstable nerve organization, she lacked the potential of insanity, despite her family history.

This young girl is intimately associated in my mind with the matter of food. One summer morning during my office hours, I suspect I had risen early, as I have this morning of my writing, I felt hungry and knew my best interests would be conserved by something in the way of food. I stepped from the office to the butler's pantry, not wishing to disturb the routine of the one housekeeping servant, as she had extra duties that day, but all I could secure that I dared eat was a crust of bread, exceedingly dry and very hard. That did not trouble me, for my teeth were good. I took it in my hand and passed out of the house to the verandah overlooking the garden. As I appeared contentedly chewing my crust of bread, more delicious to my taste under the circumstance of my genuine hunger, than the supreme effort of the most celebrated *chef* of our expensive gilded hosteleries, she looked at me with a pitying smile, saying: "Doctor, are you as hungry as that?" To her my enjoyment was incomprehensible. This, however, is true, I have been as hungry as that all my life—not for physical food, but for knowledge, for joy, happiness, for all the things that go to make up life. My enjoyment of the sun's radiance, of a beautiful land-



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scape, picture, book, music, in the unravelling to me of a scientific problem, is beyond words, and I fancy one reason may be that I have partaken so sparingly that appetite and desire know no dulling and zest remains.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*"The Allegory has another View."*

BACON, THE PHYSICAL FABLES.

*The Point of View or "It will do you Good".*

A FEW weeks since and while engaged upon this story I was returning from a necessary errand in a down town shop, when just as I crossed the street, I heard a voice saying "There you go with your head in the air, oblivious of everybody." A detaining hand was laid upon my arm, and the voice continued, "You must stop and speak to me. Why don't you quit working and have some fun?" It was I found an old acquaintance and subsequent patient of bright cheery helpful presence. All I needed to do was to shake hands, stand still and smile, for her monologue went on. "Why don't you get married? I knew the man you ought to marry. He is a doctor and is more interested in the science of medicine than anything else." I continued to look at her smilingly. It was not necessary to talk. She understood by means of my smile, uplifted eyebrow and gestures. It is extremely difficult for me to try to listen, let alone talk, in the noisy streets. However,

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just here if ever I contemplated marriage, I should not select a member of my own profession. But she continued, "I want you to come to the next meeting of the ——— club on Saturday afternoon. It is to be a special day and the meeting will be held in the ball room of the ——— . "It will do you good." I thanked her, said I did not believe I could come, as I had much to do, but she insisted and put into the urging so much of her cheering magnetic self, that I finally said "Call me up next Saturday morning during office hours, and I will give you a definite answer." "Why—will you forget?" "No," I replied, "I will not forget, but I appreciate your desire to have me, and if I can arrange it, your call will serve as a stimulus to a little extra effort."

Saturday morning came and with it her call. I was busy in the office and the weather was abominable, but in response to the sympathetic resonance of her voice I replied that I would come. When the work was finished, luncheon eaten, I rested myself by a prolonged plunge of face and hands in hot water, then quietly made my toilette. By the time it was finished and the cab at the door, a transformation had taken place. The lines of fatigue had disappeared from my face, and although as always pale, my eyes were bright and for the benefit of the lay reader my directoire costume was stunningly elegant

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and very becoming. On the way I called to speak with a friend who said he did not need to be told that I was going to a function, I looked it. This bit of approval did me no harm, and when I reached the brilliantly lighted room, crowded with women—some men, but it was a woman's affair, I was in extremely good form and full of pleasant anticipations. I found the same untoward condition of ventilation and vibration as characterizes all places where human kind congregates, however, and returned home tired and depressed. It took me days, yes weeks to get over that extra fatigue and led to my being asked by an intimate and very sensible friend "Don't you think Doctor you had better leave the stage and give your real self a chance?" To his query I replied that I had not done these things for fifteen years past, until within a year I had been trying to do a little—as I did not wish to be stranded on the shores of time. But he was right. It is not the best life after all, this life of pose and function which has supplanted to too great an extent the life of the home and fireside. The husband of an artist friend complained to me recently, as did she herself, that there never was time even for a little family council.

Again one evening while engaged upon this writing, an old acquaintance of what would have been my girlhood, if I had not entered the medical pro-

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fession as soon as I could by reason of the age limit and was instead a hard worked doctor, called me up to know might he call and bring me some coffee from his coffee plantation up in the mountains of Mexico. I had seen him but twice in a quarter of a century, the last time nearly a year previously. At that time he told me of his artistic comfortable bungalow, of the native servants and of a life of luxury in relation to all the comforts of life, but of absolute solitude save for the natives. He was a bachelor, a man who in his early life had not had the advantage of education and culture, but who had taken them all on in the attrition of life with the best and most cultured people of a college town. I had not known him well, as my life was so set apart from that of the other young people, yet he was associated with some of its beautiful memories, was one of the satellites around a body of interesting young women, chief among them a young woman of my own age who had stepped aside from the duties and pleasures of her life at the suggestion of a physician brother a few years older than myself, with whom I was associated in professional work. This physician and I were the best of friends and he saw what I did not realize that I was working too hard and steadily, and that I needed the companionship of young people. I bless his memory at this distance for the kindly thought for he has finished life's problem, earlier than he



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should. To know his sister, a beautiful winsome girl, possessed of all the attributes that invite love and confidence and of a joyousness and radiance that endeared her to all was to have glimpsed a beautiful soul. It seems but yesterday that the tidings flashed over the wires, which plunged the village in mourning, "beautiful Mary ——— is drowned." Her first attention, however, after her brother spoke of me was to call upon me and later to ask me for the week end to her home. In order that I might see the other side of life, the choicest of her young friends were invited to meet me. It was then and there that I met the gentleman who called me up to know might he call to bring me the package of coffee from his Mexican plantation promised ten months before. I said I should be very pleased to see him. He came and spent the evening and naturally the conversation turned upon the olden times, the old friends, on our great loss and grief when this friend was taken, and in memory the anguish at a distance of many many years was relived. Out of the past came trooping the shadowy forms and faces of the many gone beyond while recollections of the living were revived. Before the call was ended he listened with great delight to some of my best music. It was all very interesting and the silvery haired gentleman with the young face said as he left "doctor I have had a beautiful evening." I was glad, because in that

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evening long ago he had contributed not a little to the happiness and merriment of us all, lifting me for a little out of the atmosphere of work and pain. But I knew what the result would be as far as I was concerned and that despite his recent recovery from a pneumonia, the fatigue which I should feel on the morrow was out of his ken. This is the morning after. I am limp and exhausted. My brain is weary with the kaleidoscopic flitting from one person and place to another in being told of all the old friends. These are things I can not do even after all these years. Had there been more than one guest the ill effects would be greater. In his recent illness, he told the friends who cared for him, "if I die and I am ready to go if that is what it means, have no fuss nor frills; send my body to the crematory to be cremated and my ashes back to the old home. I have had an awfully good time during my life." Many was the good time he gave others and it would be fitting to inscribe on the memorial urn—Alas; Poor Yorick! Full of quips and jests but with a very great delicacy of feeling and tenderness toward others. So feelingly did he speak of our mutual friend whose life was cut off untimely that I wondered if after all despite his universality of friendliness to his women friends and they were legion, she was not the one who living would have made his later days less lonely. This period of my

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life, the first of my twenties, was one of great care, responsibility, hard work, too little sleep as well as too little food. This latter because the former conditions prejudiced my appetite and digestion. It has left its impress and contributed to what I ultimately suffered. In the six to seven years that followed my doctor's degree I had made myself felt in my work and by my friends so forcibly that only recently it gave me great pleasure to find that still I am cherished in appreciative and loving remembrance for the one and by the other. This is a recompense even though I am not possessed of the best of nerve strength. Compensation is the law of life. Everything meets with either reward or punishment according to its nature. Mine is both, but the lack of strength has never, save momentarily in my bitterest agony of physical pain and most profound depression outweighed the knowledge of having met the needs of those to whom I have borne the relation of physician, friend, comforter and counsellor. I can still feel every atom of vitality leaving my body as poor desperate women from themselves taken away have clung to me begging for help in the depths of their despair. No, this is not right for the average person, but I can only question whether my qualities of mind and heart would have been better filled or better satisfied under different circumstances. I had to *be* and *do*. This was born in me and as a little morsel of

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humanity I used to press my hands into my eyes that I might revel in the beautiful optical phenomena and wing my thought away to the time when I should have power and influence. In those days perhaps I was eight years of age—my ambition was a seat in the counsels of the nation, not the lower, but the upper house, or else as chief executive of the country. The strenuous, restless, daring, impulsive and often injudicious executive who has just left the executive chair, has never known a greater desire for achievement than have I, has experienced no greater ambition. This will show my nature and tendency. But neither the thought of power nor influence weighed with me if it did not have the humanitarian aspect.

It is the same whenever I overdo and in whatever way, and the oft repeated "It Will do you Good" of my friends is a good deal like flaunting a red flag by the matador in front of the infuriated bull of the arena. I have tried so often and this Shylock of exhausted nerve force never fails to exact to the utmost his pound of flesh. It may be a medical meeting, a social call, any demand upon my limited resources. Many a time I have returned from a medical meeting where I have been an interested listener, a reader of a paper or a contributor to the discussion, conscious of but one desire and that to reach the quiet and seclusion of my own four walls. No one has ever known what I have endured in the effort to keep up



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with these duties save my physician, and he by no means always or fully, for our lives were too busy with our respective professional duties for me to burden him with all these experiences, unless I was pretty well down and out. They have all been recovered from in the course of time, sometimes many weeks, even months, before the memory of some single experience would disappear and leave me with a feeling that, after all, I had not failed in my effort and had just as good a right to be happy and satisfied as any one else. The tears used to come, but with an increased degree of neuronie energy self-control is better, and now it is only a long sobbing breath, a setting of my teeth in grim determination and a resolute taking hold of something in the way of scientific interest or helpful diversion, until I can put the feeling of having failed entirely away from me. Too long hours at any of these functions tells heavily upon me. I have therefore had to hold and increase my work from the quiet of my professional rooms and with the vigor of my pen.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*"Human Experience like the Stern Lights  
Of a Ship at Sea, Illumines only  
The Path which we have Passed Over."*

COLERIDGE.

SOME day there may be a different name for the condition known as neurasthenia, one that will carry with it less of opprobrium and prejudice than now. It can not, however, continue to be recognized as a condition without a pathology. It is true the microscope has not yet discovered and may not until more powerful means are available, the toxin of fatigue. The disturbance of physiological processes—a pathological physiology—is always in evidence. In both the cases referred to in this connection there was a chronic fatigue of mind and body, a complete going stale in the language of athletes, physically, mentally and spiritually if you will, for they are mutually dependent and interdependent conditions. The toxin of fatigue exists as truly as does the toxin of fermentative indigestion, and while the discovery of the latter and its relation to dietary measures is a tremendous stride in medical progress, showing how by

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reason of its presence the use of certain foodstuffs interferes with all the physio-chemical actions related to normal life and function, causing the production of certain bodies with learned names which are accompanied by certain and many of the symptoms of the neurasthene and by poisoning the nerves and brain through the toxin-laden blood, it does not tell the whole story. Let the same individual have the opportunity for an ideal vacation, no stress nor strain as to the financial end, absolutely care free, provided with every comfort of luxury, which is a different thing from every luxury; congenial friends and surroundings, out of doors, preferably on a houseboat in southern or northern waters according to the season of the year, or a private yacht, and everything and anything can be eaten without the end products of the physio-chemical laboratory evidencing wrong action and reactions. Exercise is not only not essential, but in these cases of chronic neurasthenic fatigue is to be avoided. In the quiet drifting of life along pleasant ways with financial and business strain removed, there is to be obtained a readjustment of all physiological processes. It goes on so quietly that no note is taken of it, until suddenly the patient finds himself so well that he could not stand it, if he felt better. But if this care-free golden holiday is not long enough, there will soon be a reversion to former untoward conditions.

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In all these weary years—not idle ones nor useless ones, nor yet years deprived of many of the joys of life—I think could I have only realized the sheer joy in living, the intensity of my delight in having once more physical strength and mental vigor, I would have made greater effort to have overcome the neurasthenic state even at great personal sacrifice. I do not feel that I have words at command to give an adequate pen picture of the profound change in thought and feeling which finally came to me after ten years of such profound nerve exhaustion and weariness as is given to comparatively few to know. With what zest and abandon I renewed my interest in life, in the joy of living, the purely physical pleasure of knowing that the sun shone, that the mornings were radiant with its glory and the evenings jewelled with its splendor of afterglow. To be able to eat and have the feeling that one has really dined, not simply fed to support life, to walk with free and buoyant tread instead of listlessly dragging one's feet along in utter weariness of the flesh and spirit, but over and above all, to be conscious of mental vigor again, so keen and dominant as to give a sense of unlimited power, this was living. When I had finally realized all this after ten years of almost continual suffering, mental and physical, days of pain and wearying nights of pain and sleeplessness, a perpetual never ending struggle to get well and keep well, to follow

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the daily routine and to help in developing and building up the work in which I was interested then do I feel that my *charming medicus* upon whom I relied implicitly and to whom I owe that which I can never pay, should have lifted me bodily from my habitat and sent me off to the quiet of the country, where I could have soaked in energy at every pore. Yet, as I say this, I know how inadequate it would have been had I gone simply for the sake of quiet, fresh air and sunshine, for to one with the restless, active brain which I possessed, mental work and mental stimulus was an absolute necessity, and so it is to every one. The intelligence that feeds upon itself is lost and the brain of such a person suffers from a condition of mental autointoxication. In addition the relation of my life to my work had to provide the necessary means or wherewith always. Therefore, my dear doctor, there remains no cause of complaint, for after all a different course might have turned out less well for me. But I do look back with profound regret on those years of my life, despite the work done in my chosen calling, despite the influence of that work and despite in addition to my many contributions to medical science, there stands at least one volume of which it had been predicted that it will always live. But the joy in things mental, physical and perhaps spiritual did not come until there came an opportunity for three whole months in the hills where I quaffed great



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breaths of life-giving air and rested content in the utter quiet, while an absolutely new and engrossing interest of a scientific nature aroused and stimulated neuron energy.

This better condition did not continue under the influence of constant hard work and continued isolation from those things which make life beautiful. Had it not been for the work, I could have invited my soul, but the work had to be done.

These last lines are being penned three and one-half years later. My fatigue is greater and the depression which grips me almost—yes! quite unendurable. The work of the year has not been so hard, but the strain in one sense has been greater and this largely because of illness and change in my distant family. The spring has dawned, things are at least for the time better and I am not only hoping but I will rise superior to the incubus of exhausted nerves before the summer's heat. I must, for there is no other course. This is true that I possess increased ability to rebound and all life's impulses are forward, anticipation rather than retrospection horizons me as it has done all my life.

There is apt to be experienced by the neurasthene, no matter how well they have met life's duties nor how much of the world's work they have done a feeling of having ignominiously failed. This is a pretty constant mental attitude with me and much of



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the time I feel and have felt even when accomplishing most the veriest failure in the world and it seems to me that every one meets their duty to life better than I. This is not said of me, but I feel it myself. There are so many things I should do to fulfill my highest obligation not only to my professional life but to life itself, but alas there is not enough of me, therefore I must do that which takes the least out of me. I do not know the accepted explanation of much of what seems my failure to do. In most instances I take the initiative, but that done I am "all in" and subsequent work must be carried on by others. I never express my regret openly, never say why I do not do more, am very apt to convey the idea that the demands upon my time render it impossible or else assume as does a medical man of my acquaintance who is a neurasthene, born with a potentiality which has been accentuated by a hard strenuous life, an attitude of absolute indifference. This he does in regard to things in which he has a vital and intelligent interest, but no one knows that such is the case, as exteriorly he is calm, quiet, self-poised, although within experiencing profound regret at his inability to compete along all lines with his confrères, knowing at the same time that mentally he is their equal if not their peer. But there is only so much nerve energy and professional work must be done, money must be pro-

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vided and all the varied duties of life, professional, social and family met. His ideals are too high to neglect these. Unless there comes a time soon, he will never be able to realize his fondest ambitions. Because I feel so often that I have failed and because of my extreme sensitiveness, I can only think that I am regarded by others as by myself a failure, but the world says no. Therefore I stay quietly at home, when possibly I could stand a little more—I question this however, because it hurts so cruelly to feel that I have not done all I should. My tentacles so to speak are out all the time to ward off vibrations that give me pain or cause exhaustion. I almost never know what it is to feel differently. As I write, there are back of me, respectively within twenty-four hours and a week, two instances occasions I had anticipated with pleasure and profit and in which I was to take an active part, but there was nothing to do but to send a telegram at the last moment in the first instance and a letter in the second, giving no reason for my failure to appear and take my part, simply stating, that it was an impossibility. I know full well that my motives are often misconstrued, but I cannot help it. I manage from first to last to be in evidence sufficiently to hold my position as a player on the stage of professional life, but I can not always advantage myself of psychological entrances and exits as to hold the centre as I should. We are all puppets, all tread-

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ing the board and playing the game with an eye to the main chance according to our point of view.

Among life's compensations are the beautiful friendships which have been mine during these more or less shut in years and still are, for the most part with brainy men and occasionally a kindred spirit in a woman. This latter did not happen so often. I fancy the reason lay in the fact that I had to be responsible professionally for the average woman whom I came to know. I was so much more self-reliant and dependable, had to be, than other women, even those of the best mental poise. They laid down their arms when they came to me, and I came to know every vulnerable point. With men it was different. I was not their father confessor in these ways, at least not for those whom I met in a social chat about my fireside. While the friendships which exist between man and man is beautiful and soul satisfying, the friendship between man and woman of congenial mental and spiritual traits not only equals but exceeds it, for after all whether it be mentally, spiritually or physically, the one complements the other. Such is the scheme of nature. It is true that I have been alone, shut out from the active whirl of the world, although actively in evidence professionally, but these fireside friends have talked of all the many and varied world interests, of science, art, literature, the drama, of the world's work, of friendship, of marriage, of music,

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of religion and the possibility of a hereafter even, other than that which comes from the characteristic transformation of energy.

One of the best of these friendships has been with my physician and while our busy work-a-day lives have prevented but little more than the professional call, I have understood always that there was mutual confidence and sympathy. Men have always accorded me my place in the profession. I have not had to ask for recognition even. This man has been most beautifully frank and generous, not hesitating either to me or of me, to express his approval and satisfaction, in what he kindly believed to be my mental ability and professional attainments.

My inability to get well and strong has been due to the need for constant devotion to my work. In it I have had great happiness and content despite the vicarious suffering, the Sinais and Gethsemanes. That they have been in evidence a considerable part of the time goes without saying, but it has taken so little to lift me above and beyond them. Sometimes that little has been a radiant day after days of gloom, a letter from some far away friend, a lessened disturbance of cerebral circulation, a new scientific interest, the steady improvement in the condition of patients, a quiet hour with some one of the choice spirits who call me kin, a chance for a little rest with change of scene and environment, a new record of music or a



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new book, sometimes one thing and sometimes another has lifted me out of a condition where all things seemed stale, flat and unprofitable, and the game not worth the candle. Just now this last twenty-four hours an "Easter bonnet" has served to lift my feminine soul into a greater degree of comfort, and after all is said and done, that feminine soul, despite the brain which men are pleased to call masculine, dominates the best of me and my life, although clothes are by no means its final nor finest expression.

This story which I have chosen to have recorded out of a multitude of experience with nerve and mental conditions is after all the autobiography of an essential neurasthene. An essential neurasthene yes! in its broadest and deepest sense, but more than that by reason of a sunstroke, of many accidents induced by utter lack of muscle tone and constant fatigue of body, the fullness of which has not been told and in no ways more than by the almost complete exhaustion of a sound center and practical loss of function of an auditory nerve. The profound anaemia which characterized my condition for years, is not essentially a neurasthenic symptom and unquestionably prejudiced my case. Others may suffer a similar injury to an auditory nerve and I would that they might be spared, not the condition, nor yet the result, for that would be impossible were



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they obligated to life's duties in similar environment to mine, but the sense of injustice under which I smarted for years, because the condition is not recognized by nerve or aural medicine as occurring in neurasthenia and nothing was looked for but a circulatory hyperesthesia and auditory fatigue. These I had, of course, but they presaged the greater, deeper and permanent injury.

To-day I should regard myself as really well, but I still work and while work never harms and life without it would lose all its charm, overwork with anxiety does and these I still have. They are a part of living. But every effort of my conscious life is to their lessening and avoidance. I have been hurt so often and constantly by all this pain and disability, that now I am no longer content to endure. My spirit must be released from this prison of chronic fatigue, before life ends.

Within myself there are great possibilities for not only my own content and happiness, my own pleasuring whether intellectually or in simple being, but for the better being and pleasuring of others. After all, that brings to me the truest happiness.

Neuronic energy will always have to be conserved as long as I live to the best good of myself and others. While I may once in a while permit a condition which gives me the keenest pleasure, where there is no consciousness of body in so far as any sensation in

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it of discomfort is concerned—not lost as under the shock of my mother's death when I was down and out, but just a feeling of aerial buoyancy, I recognize fully that it is not one to be dallied with. This happened recently under the pressure of extra strain and careful abstemious eating, in order to avoid overstocking of tired chemical cells, and led to my laughingly telling my physician that I felt like a soul poised aloft on a needle's point ready to dance off into space. Experience told me I needed more food of which I partook under the most favorable circumstances I could command. I did not over eat, on the contrary—the repast would not have been regarded as moderate by the most abstemious, but it was sufficient to disturb the clean cut chemical actions and reactions, in other words the furnace was overstocked for its condition, and as a result my leucocytes became all “balled up”. Another time I shall proceed with greater circumspection when my soul body becomes the paramount factor in life and shall endeavor to restore the perfect balance of my physical, intellectual and spiritual being by means of my favorite food, milk *au naturel* or fermented. This is my custom, but in this instance the sense of tremor all through my brain which always sends out the signal “C. Q. D.” was so marked and my need of a reinforcement of neuronic energy so great in connection with my work that I indulged in a chop and potato. Under

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good conditions it would have been all right, but not under the conditions present. It is difficult to learn all these lessons even in an abundant experience, and this is why so many cases of more or less chronic nerve exhaustion fare so badly, unless the physician in charge is equal to the careful direction of food and rest. Even so it is by no means an easy matter.

While in the history of every essential neurasthene there is a time when frequent regular feeding of easily digested nourishment is essential, yet, in common with the rest of mankind there is a tendency to overfeed. More people eat too much than too little, and the individual whose nerve energy is not great and in whom it has been overtaxed is happiest and best off to take nourishment in small but more frequent quantities under conditions of great stress. Personally it is difficult for me to enlarge my dietary repertoire, even in this way. Here, as in all medical work, for that matter throughout many of the relations of life, individual tendencies and characteristics must be considered.

It is interesting in this connection to note that at the time he was engaged in his work upon the models of that well known and wondrously beautiful chalice for Pope Clement, Benvueneto Cellini for reasons connected with his physical well being was living most abstemiously. He records in his autobiography that he produced finer things and of more exquisite

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invention during this time of abstemious eating than at any other time in his life.

When all is said and done, I shall fail of my highest duty, if I do not leave the impression of an energetic, active, interested physician, an alert mentality, with a never failing delight in intellectual pleasures, a joy amounting to an abandon in radiant days, beautiful scenes and music, and an interest in life in all its complexity of relation, most keen and dominant. No harm has befallen my neuron energy in penning this record—on the contrary, the quiet retrospective view of the entire picture has taught its lesson.

“Human experience, like the stern lights of a ship at sea illumines only the path which we have passed over.

This was true in Coleridge’s time, but it is not true co-day, for there are the magnificent search lights of tremendous amperage which modern science and commercialism have provided and by means of which the path of the trackless deep still unsailed can be clearly seen.

This story has been told for two reasons, one as has been said as a means of mental divertisement, for in the telling of it, while I have not lessened my disabilities, I have put them more firmly and surely behind me, the other in the belief, that it may illumine the untrodden path ahead as well as the one which has been passed over, that others, whether of the pro-

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fession or not, may at least be spared the injustice which I have sometimes felt I have suffered. It is not told with any thought of inviting pity and sympathy or with a desire to perpetuate the condition. Far from it. Every opportunity of which I dare avail myself finds me enjoying life with an abandon of which few are capable even though many years my junior. This is because my appetites are not jaded, whether it be for food, radiance, for beautiful sights, and sounds, for friends, or for scientific and intellectual pleasures. The one exception is my professional work, at which I have so incessantly labored. Even this exception only exists at times. At others I put myself into it with all my old time zest and interest.



















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